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ARTISTS & ILLUSTRATORS ON TOUR THIS SUMMER

From portrait demonstrations and landscape competitions to exclusive exhibition openings, it's been a very busy yet enjoyable summer for the *Artists & Illustrators* team so far.

We kicked things off in a celebratory mood at the Jonathan Cooper Park Walk Gallery. As part of her *Artists & Illustrators* Artist of the Year 2014 win, Camilla Dowse was given the opportunity to stage her own solo exhibition and responded by producing a beautiful portfolio of street scenes. Her private view was a great success: champagne flowed, red dots appeared and at least one rather prominent MP was in attendance, entourage and all! If you fancy following in Camilla's footsteps, be sure to enter this year's competition on page 24.

I also joined New English Art Club president Richard Pikesley on the judging panel for the third annual Pintar Rapido outdoor painting event (look out for a full profile with the winner, Alain Speed, in a forthcoming issue), while over at Oxfordshire's Art in Action festival, we had queues outside the marquee for Peter Keegan's portrait demonstrations on the *Artists & Illustrators* stand. It's been a great summer so far, thanks to all the artists and readers who joined us along the way!

Steve Pill, Editor

Get in touch!

What arty events, courses or exhibitions have you attended this summer? Share your stories and photos with us here...

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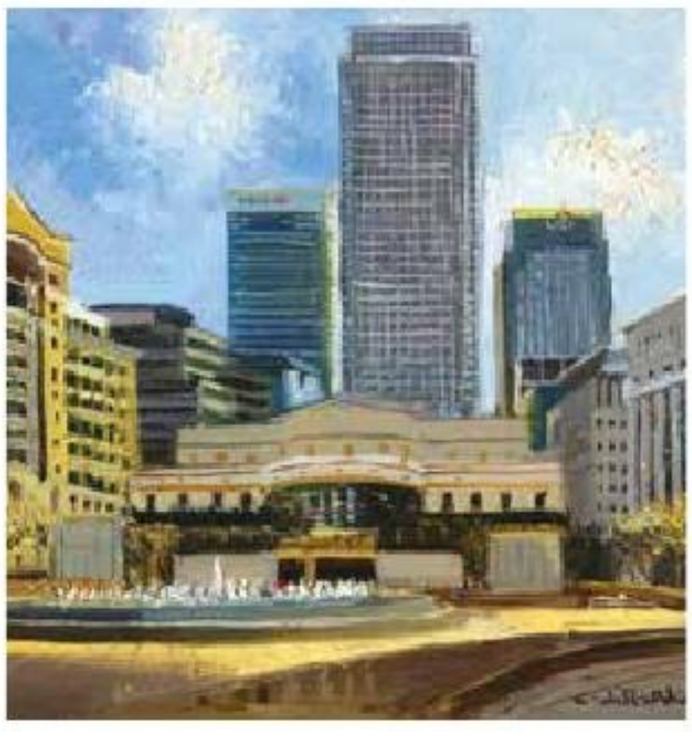

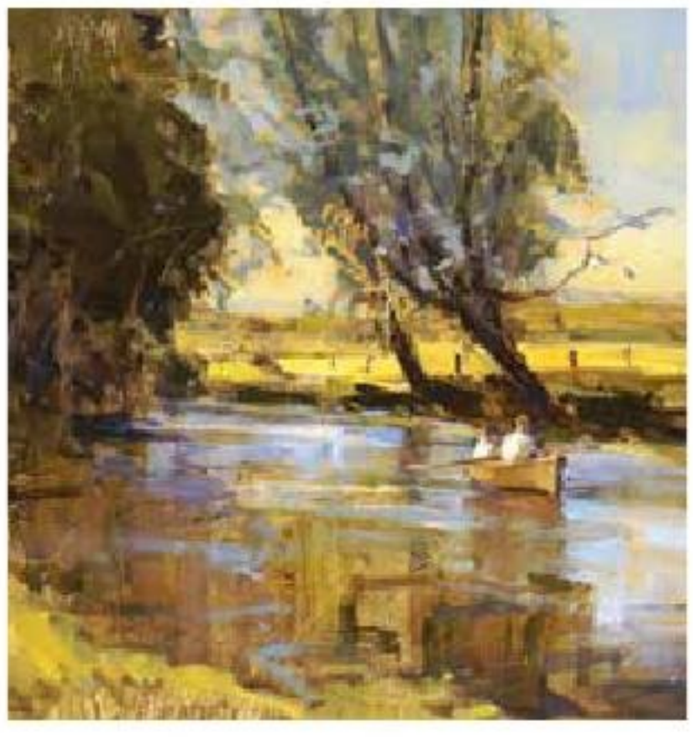

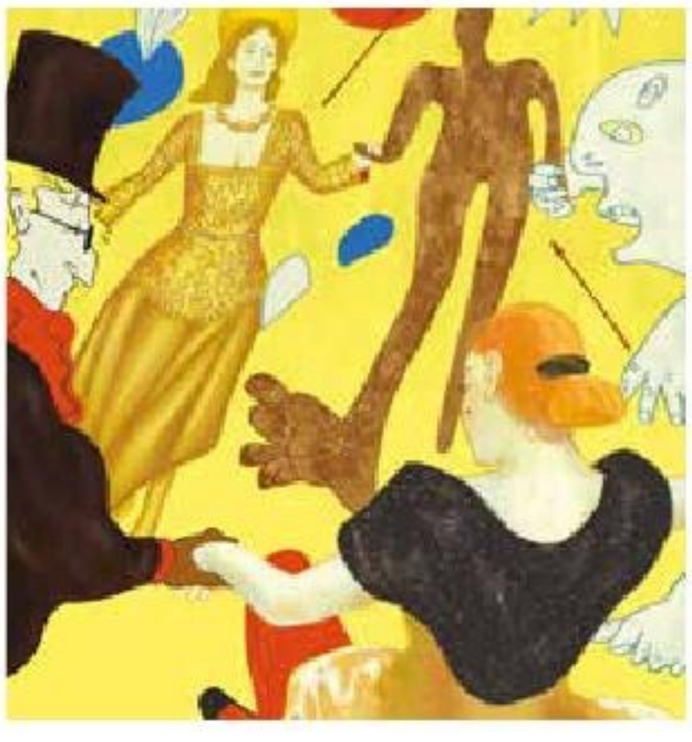

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It's time to forget everything you know about art

YOUR LETTERS...

LETTER OF THE MONTH

MY £100 STUDIO

After trying to juggle illustration work and home life at the family dining table for a few years, I desperately needed a creative space of my own. I needed a studio that a) was close to home, b) was big enough to have my easel up permanently, and c) didn't cost a fortune.

A friend suggested using our garage lean-to that we'd been using as a dumping ground. A bit of hard graft, £100 and a trip to a well-known Swedish store and hey presto: a spacious, light, functional studio that is all mine. I find it amazing considering it was there all along, I just needed to realise it.
Lindsay Pritchard, via email

A VIRTUAL HOLIDAY

Re: Talking Techniques, Issue 354
I am constantly encouraged by the way your magazine prompts us to choose different materials, new techniques or another location to paint, as the Summer issue illustrated with its feature on light. I was halfway to Cornwall in my mind!
Bob Price, via email

FELLOW FLORA AND FAUNA FAN

While having a good read of the July issue, I thoroughly enjoyed the article on painting the garden and Tessa Pearson's really colourful prints. It reminded me of my own floral paintings, in the different styles or ways of seeing. It's great to know there are lots more people out there who are also in awe of flora and fauna.
Lynne Daniels, via email

write to us

Send your letter or email to the addresses below:

POST:
Your Letters
Artists & Illustrators
The Chelsea Magazine Company Ltd.
Jubilee House
2 Jubilee Place
London SW3 3TQ

EMAIL: info@artistsandillustrators.co.uk

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LOVE A GOOD PROJECT

Re: 28 Summer Projects, Issue 354
As our final life class session of the year, we were asked to create a work using our life studies in any way we chose.

I thought your summer projects were a great idea and I decided to use number 18, "Brilliant Base Colours", as the basis for my pastel painting, *Quiet Waters*. It was painted on a Vermillion ground, which I thought would complement the greens in the landscape while also warming the figures.

Thanks for a great magazine!
Dennis Lee, via email

What a brilliant feature that was! I've read *Artists & Illustrators* for over 20 years and every month is always interesting and inspiring. You manage to keep it varied and new, and then the last issue arrived and the Summer Projects were like a year's worth of magazines in one.

From inspiring people to try a new technique or solving artist's block for regular painters, it was like an entire art manual in one issue. I have been unable to put it down.
Joanne Duncan, Dorchester

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Canaletto (1697–1768), *A View of Walton Bridge* (detail), 1754, oil on canvas
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9 ARTISTIC THINGS TO DO IN

SEPTEMBER

1

THE SUNDAY TIMES WATERCOLOUR COMPETITION 2015

With a £10,000 cash first prize and the Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures on the judging panel, this broadsheet-sponsored event remains one of the UK's most prestigious open competitions. The panel whittled down more than 1,200 submissions to the 90 works that will go on display this month – including Deborah Walker's breathtaking seascape, *Reveal*, above. The exhibition opens at London's Mall Galleries (14-19 September) and then tours to Castle Fine Art in Birmingham (10-18 October) and Guildford House Gallery in Surrey (14 November to 2 January 2016). **www.sundaytimeswatercolour.org**

2 PRINT
Monoprinting Workshop

Explore a painterly approach to printmaking with artist Sue Brown's one-day course at Shropshire's Twenty Twenty Gallery (26 September). Learn how to ink an intaglio plate, develop your collagraph techniques and create your own print in a day.

www.twenty-twenty.co.uk

3 LISTEN
Art Out Loud

This major new literary festival (18-20 September) at the Chatsworth estate in Derbyshire reflects The Duke and Duchess of Devonshire's lifelong passion for art. Speakers will include celebrity portrait painter Jonathan Yeo, William Morris biographer Fiona McCarthy and Michael Craig-Martin CBE (pictured below left with sitter Lady Burlington).

www.chatsworth.org

4 PAINT
A Brush with the Broads

After the success of last year's inaugural event, this outdoor painting festival (25-28 September) returns with more workshops and social events. Based at Clippesby Hall in Great Yarmouth, highlights include two demonstrations by Adebanji Alade, who answers your plein air painting questions on page 56.

www.abrushwiththebroads.co.uk

5 BUY
Buy Art Fair

More than 35,000 visitors have spent almost £2.5 million on original paintings and print editions at Manchester's Buy Art Fair since it launched in 2008. Grab a bargain for yourself this month as the event moves to the city's Old Granada Studios (24-27 September).

www.buyartfair.co.uk

6 DRAW
Life Drawing in a Day

Figure drawing is one of the oldest and most guaranteed ways to sharpen up your hand-eye coordination. Try it for yourself, as Sheffield's Millennium Gallery hosts a six-hour intensive life class (19 September) for artists of all abilities.

www.museums-sheffield.org.uk

7 LEARN
Developing Drawing and Painting Projects

If you struggle to find the time and headspace to develop your art, this 12-week course at The Conservatoire in London (17 September to 3 December) is just the thing. Award-winning abstract artist David Webb will encourage you to plan, research, experiment and critique your work in a spacious studio environment.

www.conservatoire.org.uk

8 VISIT
Herts Open Studios 2015

First established in 1990, this three-week, countywide event celebrates its silver anniversary this year (5-27 September). To celebrate, why not pay a visit to some of the 200 artists and makers taking part? Download a brochure and map from the website.

www.hvaf.org.uk

9 READ
Painting Still Life in Gouache

Watercolour's opaque cousin is often overlooked by art books, so this new title (£16.99, Crowood Press) is doubly welcome. Artist Kevin Scully champions the medium through a varied set of demonstrations and technical guides that are informative and easy to follow.

www.crowood.com

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EXHIBITIONS

SEPTEMBER'S BEST ART SHOWS

ENGLAND – LONDON

Bridget Riley: Learning from Seurat
17 September to 17 January 2016
Find out more in our feature on page 66.
The Courtauld Gallery. www.courtauld.ac.uk

More Than Meets the Eye
23 September to 20 December
Learn about how key artworks were painted.
Estorick Collection. www.estorickcollection.com

Ladybird by Design
Until 27 September
120 illustrations from the classic kids' books.
House of Illustration. www.houseofillustration.org.uk

THE FALLEN WOMAN
25 September to 3 January 2016
Chastity was a prized quality in Victorian females and, as outdated as it may seem today, the era's writers and artists delighted in depicting 'fallen' woman who 'succumbed' to sex before marriage. This exhibition pairs Pre-Raphaelite portraits with petitions submitted to the Foundling Hospital, after its admissions policy was altered in favour of mothers of illegitimate children. This powerful display promises to reaffirm the importance of painted portraiture as a document of our times.
The Foundling Museum, London.
www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk

BP Portrait Award 2015
Until 20 September
The capital's last chance to see this year's shortlist.
National Portrait Gallery. www.npg.org.uk

Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden
Until 11 October
From landscaped estates to visions of Eden.
Queen's Gallery. www.royalcollection.org.uk

Ai Weiwei
19 September to 13 December
Thought-provoking contemporary art from China.
Royal Academy of Arts. www.royalacademy.org.uk

Out of Chaos: Ben Uri – 100 Years in London
Until 13 December
Centenary of art championed by the Jewish gallerist.
Somerset House. www.somersethouse.org.uk

Barbara Hepworth: Sculpture for a Modern World
Until 25 October
Rare London display for much-admired sculptor.
Tate Britain. www.tate.org.uk

The World Goes Pop
17 September to 24 January 2016
Pop Art from Latin America, Asia and beyond.
Tate Modern. www.tate.org.uk

Facing History: Contemporary Portraiture
Until 24 April 2016
Prints by Grayson Perry, Julian Opie and more.
Victoria and Albert Museum. www.vam.ac.uk

ENGLAND – NORTH

Taking Flight: St Ives in the 1950s
Until 3 October
Abstract paintings with a Cornish flavour.
Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Cumbria. www.abbothall.org.uk

John Tunnard: Nature, Politics and Science
Until 4 October
100 artworks by the well-connected Modernist.
DLI Museum and Art Gallery, Durham.
www.dlidurham.org.uk

Naomi Alexander: Domesticity
Until 31 October
Intimate interiors previewed last month.
Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead.
www.shipleyartgallery.org.uk

Jackson Pollock: Blind Spots
Until 18 October
The US drip painter's blackest creations.
Tate Liverpool. www.tate.org.uk

Reality
Until 29 November
Recent figurative art by Freud, Hockney and co.
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Matthew Darbyshire: An Exhibition
25 September to 10 January 2016
Sculptural pieces and large-scale 'environments'.
Manchester Art Gallery. www.manchestergalleries.org

Colin Rodney Burrows: Out of the Ordinary
Until 1 November
Commonplace objects in a photorealist style.
Salford Museum and Art Gallery.
www.salfordcommunityleisure.co.uk

Steel City, City on the Move
Until 11 October
Parallels drawn between Sheffield and Pittsburgh.
Millennium Gallery, Sheffield.
www.museums-sheffield.org.uk

Bob and Roberta Smith: Art for All
5 September to 3 January 2016
Works depicting art education through the ages.
Yorkshire Sculpture Park. www.ysp.co.uk

GF WATTS, FOUND DROWNED, C.1848-1850. © WATTS GALLERY

ANTONY GORMLEY: ELEMENTAL
5 September to 15 November
Crosby Beach has been something of a shrine to Antony Gormley ever since the 100 statues that comprise *Another Place* were installed on the sand in 2005. Now visitors to Southport can explore another side to the sculptor's practice via his works on paper. The recent *North Light* series was made on location in Norfolk using carbon and casein – a quick-drying paint with a glue-like consistency.
The Atkinson, Southport.
www.theatkinson.co.uk

ENGLAND – SOUTH

Henry Moore: From Paper to Bronze
Until 25 October
100 drawings by the talented sculptor.
Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury.
www.waddesdon.org.uk

Canaletto: Celebrating Britain
Until 4 October
Stunning vistas from the Italian's nine-year stay.
The Holburne Museum, Bath. www.holburne.org

Richard Long: Time and Space
Until 15 November
The Bristolian land artist explores his home city.
Arnolfini, Bristol. www.arnolfini.org.uk

Sickert in Dieppe
Until 4 October
Seaside townscapes by a Brit abroad.
Pallant House Gallery, Chichester. www.pallant.org.uk

The Creative Genius of Stanley Spencer
Until 20 March 2016
Celebrating the late Sir Stanley's figurative art.
Stanley Spencer Gallery, Cookham, Berkshire.
www.stanleyspencer.org.uk

William and Evelyn de Morgan
Until 13 April 2016
Ceramics and oils from the Arts & Crafts movement.
Watts Gallery, Guildford. www.wattsgallery.org.uk

Horizons
12 September to 3 January 2016
Highlights from the Kettle's Yard collection.
Jerwood Gallery, Hastings. www.jerwoodgallery.org

Magnificent Obsessions
12 September until 24 January 2016
Private collections of Blake, Warhol and more.
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich.
www.scva.ac.uk

The Bigger Picture
12 September to 21 November
Cornish paintings from the 1920s to the 1960s.
Penlee House Gallery and Museum, Penzance.
www.penleehouse.org.uk

Artist Rooms: Gerhard Richter
26 September to 16 January 2016
Explore the German painter's varied portfolio.
Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery.
www.plymouth.gov.uk/museums

From Eric Ravilious to Grayson Perry
Until 25 October
Collected works of Essex-based artists.
Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden. www.fryartgallery.org

JMW Turner: Architecture and Ambition
Until 27 September
Local watercolours of the cathedral city.
Salisbury Museum, Wiltshire.
www.salisburymuseum.org.uk

SCOTLAND

David Alexander and Elizabeth Dagg
2-13 September
Sculpture and paintings of figures and landscapes.
Castle Douglas Art Gallery. www.dumgal.gov.uk

Scottish Artists 1750-1900
Until 7 February 2016
Delving into the Royal Collection.
Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse,
Edinburgh. www.royalcollection.org.uk

James Cumming RSA: Symbols of the Mind
Until 15 February 2016
Exemplary works of draughtsmanship.
Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh.
www.royalscottishacademy.org

Scottish Identity in Colour
Until 31 January 2016
Portraits by the Scottish Colourist JD Fergusson.
Fergusson Gallery, Perth. www.pkc.gov.uk

WALES

John Carroll: On a Wing and a Prayer
26 September to 8 November
Large canvases inspired by Iron Age artefacts.
Oriel Ynys Môn, Anglesey. www.kyffinwilliams.info

Cedric Morris Portraits
Until 27 September
Small yet engaging set of eccentric oils.
National Museum Cardiff.
www.museumwales.ac.uk

IRELAND

Colin Davidson: Silent Testimony
Until 17 January 2016
Portraits of people affected by the Troubles.
Ulster Museum, Belfast. www.nmni.com

El Lissitzky: The Artist and the State
Until 18 October
Graphic paintings by the Russian revolutionary.
Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. www.imma.ie

ANTONY GORMLEY / HORIZON II, 2014. © THE ARTIST

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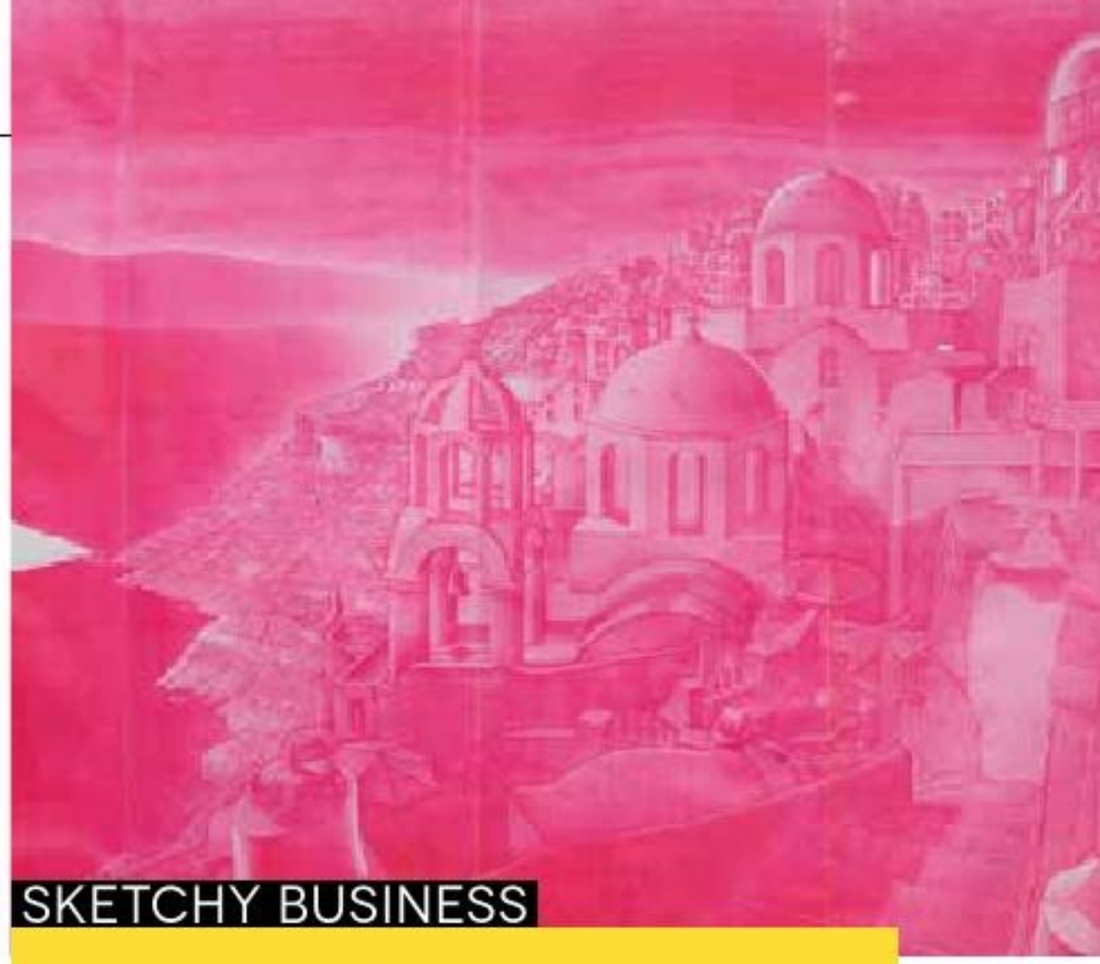
If you've ever been put off the prospect of printmaking by the lengthy list of kit required, the time for procrastinating is over. Manchester art shop Fred Aldous has launched a superb little Block Printing Kit complete with a full set of tools, ink, lino, and even 20 cards and envelopes to send your handiwork to friends and family. Local print collective Mono has even written an informative handbook to guide you through the process. *Artists & Illustrators* readers can save 15% off the £39.97 RRP by quoting the promo code BLOCK15 at the checkout* at www.fredaldous.co.uk.

*TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY – SEE WWW.CHELSEAMAGAZINES.COM/TERMS. OFFER ENDS 30 SEPTEMBER 2015.



SKETCHY BUSINESS

The Jerwood Drawing Prize is the largest annual exhibition of its kind in the UK. The three-person panel has now selected 60 works for the exhibition (including Gary Lawrence's *Santorini Polaroid*, pictured) and £15,000 of prize money will be awarded at a preview evening on 15 September. *Jerwood Drawing Prize 2015* runs from 16 September to 25 October at the Jerwood Space, London SE1, and then tours. For details, visit www.jerwoodvisualarts.org

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

JOHN RUSKIN PRIZE 2015
Brief: Send 2D works for the third instalment of the Campaign for Drawing's open competition. This year's theme is 'Recording Britain Now: Society'.
Deadline: 23 November
Exhibition: 26 February to 17 April 2016 at New Art Gallery, Walsall
Enter online: www.thebigdraw.org/ruskinprize

ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY ANNUAL OPEN
Brief: Celebrating the best in contemporary practice, the RSA requests one or two small or medium artworks (no larger than 80cm in any direction).
Deadline: 5pm, 18 October
Hand-in days: 13-14 November
Exhibition: 28 November to 14 February 2016 at the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh
Enter online: www.royalscottishacademy.org

PASTEL SOCIETY ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2016
Brief: Follow in the footsteps of Degas and Whistler by submitting work in dry media to this contemporary show.
Deadline: 6 November, noon
Receiving day: 9 January 2016
Exhibition: 23 February to 5 March 2016
Enter online: www.mallgalleries.org.uk

NEXT ISSUE: PAINTING AT DOWNTON ABBEY • PORTRAIT MASTERCLASS • HOW TO PAINT CLOUDS AND SKIES • LOYD GROSSMAN'S TASTE FOR ITALIAN ART
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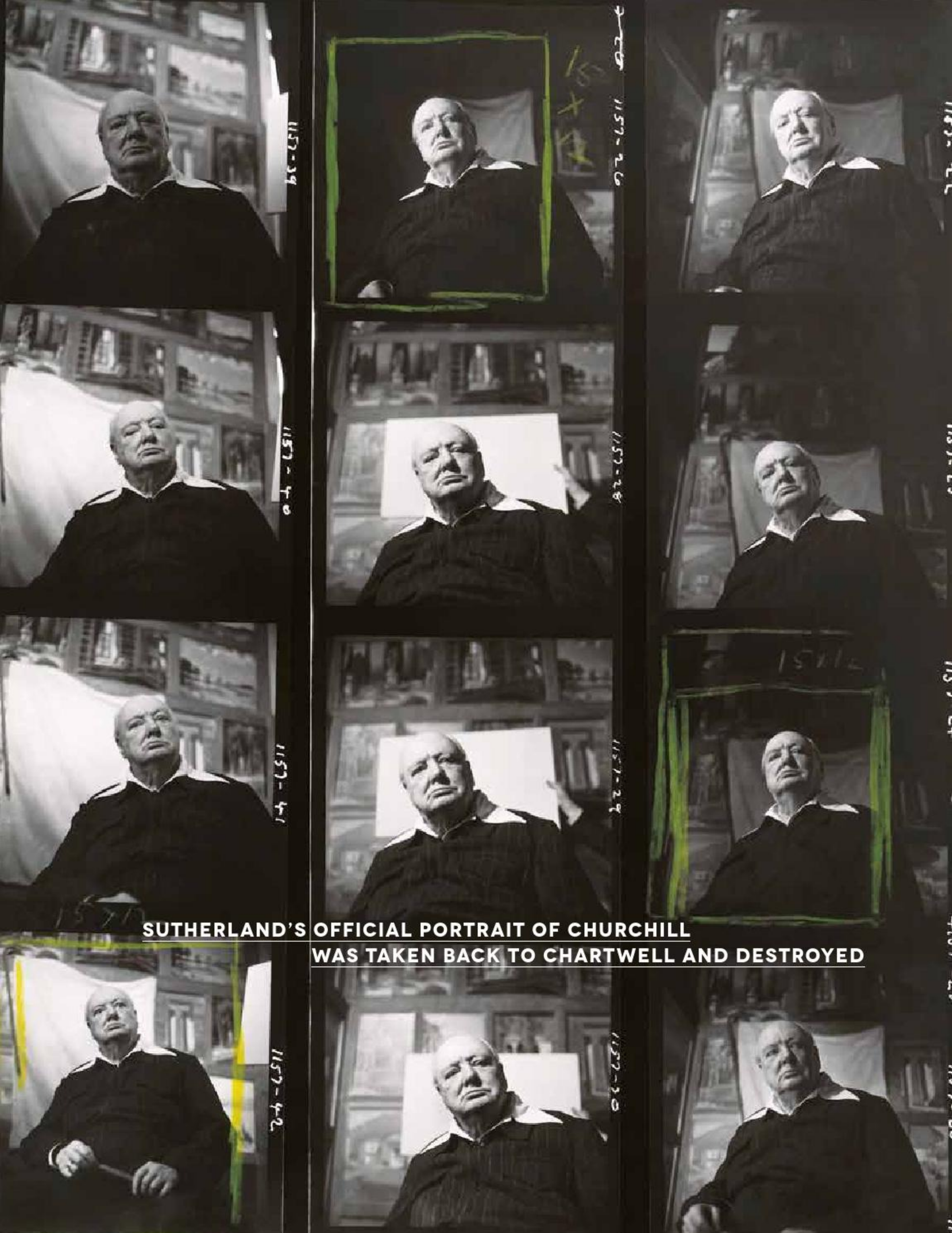

SUTHERLAND'S OFFICIAL PORTRAIT OF CHURCHILL
WAS TAKEN BACK TO CHARTWELL AND DESTROYED

GREAT BRITISH PORTRAITS

AS HISTORIAN **SIMON SCHAMA** LAUNCHES HIS MULTIMEDIA PROJECT *THE FACE OF BRITAIN*, HE REVEALS THE STORY BEHIND GRAHAME SUTHERLAND'S LOST CHURCHILL PAINTING, WHILE OVER THE PAGE A SELECTION OF LEADING ARTISTS AND ART LOVERS SELECT THEIR FAVOURITE BRITISH PORTRAITS

From the exhaustive *A History of Britain* to the highly emotive *The Story of the Jews*, Simon Schama has developed a reputation for putting a very personal spin on a seemingly vast topics and challenging conventional wisdom along the way. This month sees the 70-year-old historian make a three-pronged attack on the history of portraiture with *The Face of Britain*, a forthcoming book, BBC TV series and five-part display at London's National Portrait Gallery.

The project, says Schama, came out of his "intense but as yet unconsummated obsession with portraits". He views a portrait as an exercise in looking, a complicated "transaction" between two or more people, and the new multimedia project is an attempt to make sense of the psychology of it all.

The Face of Britain will be divided into five categories – Power, Love, Fame, the People, and the Self. Each will avoid the usual chronological approach and instead make a choice selection of works that illuminate each point. Part of the aim, says Schama, was to delve into "the process of how they got made – the wonderful mysteries, comedies, difficulties, sorrows; this complicated relationship of looking and being looked at."

One of the most fascinating entries into the Power category is Graham Sutherland's rendition of Winston Churchill. To celebrate his forthcoming 80th birthday, politicians from both the Conservative and Labour parties contributed funds toward an official portrait. The sittings, says Schama, were difficult. "The first thing Churchill said is, 'What would you like: the bulldog or the cherub?' but Sutherland doesn't want to be told that those are the only choices available."

The portrait was due to be unveiled at a great ceremony in Westminster Hall but when Churchill sees his likeness, he tries to ban the painting from the ceremony. The Prime Minister had suffered a stroke several months earlier and Sutherland's decision to portray him as a sort of "magnificent ruin" does not go down well.

According to Schama, Churchill's private political secretary advises him that he must graciously accept the portrait at the ceremony under the watching TV cameras. "When the painting is unveiled, Churchill gets up and says, 'Well, this is certainly a remarkable example of modern art' and a gale of laughter sweeps through Westminster Hall," says Schama.

Sutherland was duly embarrassed in public and his portrait was taken back to Churchill's Chartwell home and destroyed. All that survives is a series of the artist's sketches and several reels of Elsbeth Juda's reference photographs – that and an old transparency, which will be projected onto the wall of the gallery.

"You will see it is one of the great paintings in British portraiture," promises Schama.

***The Face of Britain* runs from 16 September to 4 January 2016 at the National Portrait Gallery, London WC2. www.npg.org.uk** >

LEFT Elsbeth R. Juda, *Winston Churchill*, 1954, photographic contact sheet
TOP RIGHT Graham Sutherland, *Winston Churchill*, 1954, pencil and wash on paper, 57x44cm
RIGHT Graham Sutherland, *Winston Churchill*, 1954, pen, ink and pencil on paper, 21x16.5cm

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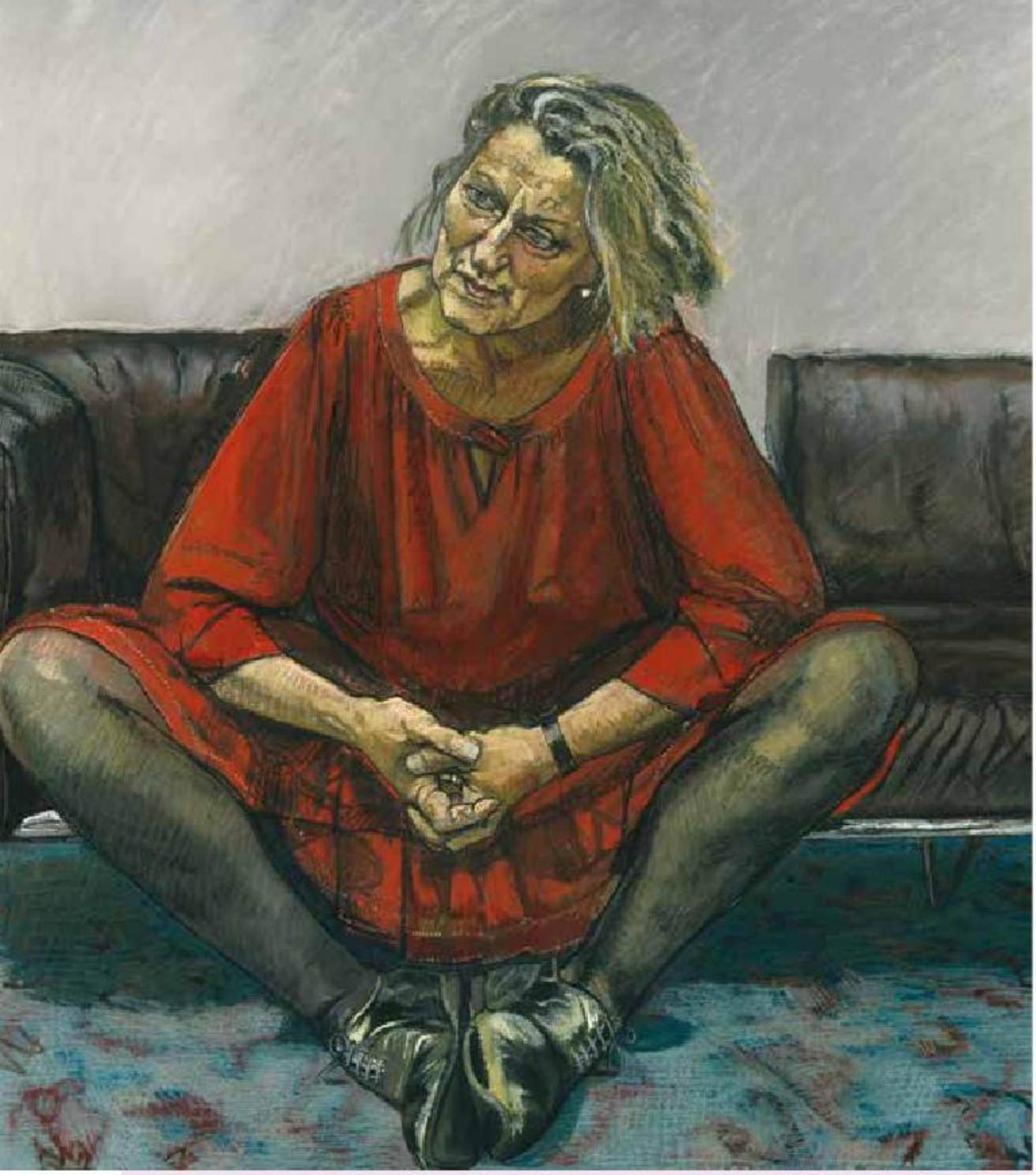

“PAULA REGO’S FOCUS ON PASTEL TEXTURE BRINGS AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF DEPTH TO A PORTRAIT WITH SUCH A SUBDUED PALETTE”

Terri Eaton on...

PAULA REGO’S *GERMAINE GREER*, 1995

For centuries, women in art have been depicted – idolised, even – through a man’s gaze. As a feminist, the power of Paula Rego’s painting of Germaine Greer is everything I hope for in a contemporary portrait. Gone is the soft glow you would associate with the Pre-Raphaelites and in its place is a gritty and unconventional portrait that is as challenging as it is influential.

For me, this painting is monumental within British portraiture because it shows a commanding female sitter rather than one who is ethereal, passive or reserved, like many of the historical portraits that came before it.

ABOVE Paula Rego, *Germaine Greer*, 1995, pastel on paper laid on aluminium, 120x111cm

OPPOSITE PAGE Francis Bacon, *Study for Self-Portrait*, oil on canvas, 165.2x142.6cm

I love Greer’s pose: confident and relaxed with a hint of confrontation. Her hardened hands clenched in front of her suggest she means business while her weathered face alludes to the astonishing battle for equality she’s fought for her entire life.

Although the painting is not as blatantly subversive as Rego’s other work, her manipulation of tonal values is very dramatic and her experimental handling of pastel is revolutionary. Her focus on texture brings an enormous amount of depth to a picture with such a subdued palette. If I’m ever in need of inspiration, I know one look at this painting in the National Portrait Gallery is all I’ll need.

Terri is the assistant editor of *Artists & Illustrators*

Shani Rhys James MBE on...

FRANCIS BACON’S *STUDY FOR SELF-PORTRAIT*, 1963

I first saw this painting in the National Museum Cardiff. In my opinion, it is a significant portrait painting because it symbolises the 20th century – it is a shift from the traditional static pose, a painting that could only be done after portraits by Cezanne, Van Gogh and Picasso.

What is so significant about this painting is how Bacon tried to portray the skull under the skin. The painting isn’t just an illustration, it is as if the artist was trying to create living matter out of the paint.

I admire the orchestration too. The flat simple shapes of the elements in the composition, the settee with its simple sweep, modern and minimal, the simplicity of all the components and then the small, neurotic paint marks of the figure, compacted flecks of white and red, the living form of a man on an inanimate couch.

Bacon worked with the accident, he took a gamble by destroying the image then bringing it back, waiting and watching and teasing out the elements that mattered. The painting lives, it is not static; it is living paint using the pure pigment, so it works both abstractly and figuratively. You can also relate it to poetry and literature: like TS Eliot’s *Wasteland* or Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, it is both poetic and visual.

By looking at this portrait I have learnt to take risks in my own work: to simplify, to keep the paint alive; to work on the abstract mark making in my painting and to make them as intense as possible; to focus on the emotional content of a portrait, and to also work from the intensely personal experience, as this comes from something meaningful and real.”

Shani is an award-winning figurative painter. Her latest exhibition, *Caught in the Mirror*, runs from 10 September to 2 October at Connaught Brown, London W1. www.connaughtbrown.co.uk

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"*STUDY FOR SELF-PORTRAIT* ISN'T JUST AN ILLUSTRATION... IT IS AS IF BACON WAS TRYING TO CREATE LIVING MATTER OUT OF THE PAINT"

© NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

Robin-Lee Hall on...

TAI-SHAN SCHIERENBERG'S *JOHN MORTIMER*, 1992

Tai won the John Player Portrait Award [now the BP Portrait Award] in 1989 and was then commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery to paint this portrait of the playwright. I remember first seeing this painting hanging in the gallery in the early 1990s and being caught by it's 'controlled freedom'.

By this, I mean that Tai has managed to be expressive and bold with his brushstrokes, but hasn't lost control around the features and hands. He has a lightness of touch without becoming too slick and mannered.

I think it captures the very British approach to portraiture where the artist is not trying to capture a likeness at the expense of everything else, they are trying to put something of themselves into the work.

I'm thinking of artists like Carel Weight, John Bratby and Melissa Scott-Miller in particular here – they all add their own angle, so the portrait isn't just a visual record of a person, it's a painting.

I'm an egg tempera painter and, in contrast to Tai's work, I work very slowly in detail with a tiny brush. I couldn't be more different.

However, there are times when I just want a change and I work in oils with a large flat brush. I have looked at this painting to remind myself again about the pure joy of oil paint, its flexibility and spontaneity. Tai conveys his enjoyment of paint well through this portrait.

Robin is an award-winning egg tempera artist and president of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters.
www.robin-leehall.wix.com

ABOVE Tai Shan Schierenberg, *John Mortimer*, 1992, oil on canvas, 182.5x183cm
TOP RIGHT Lucian Freud, *John Minton*, 1952, oil on canvas, 37x27cm
RIGHT Isaac Fuller, *Isaac Fuller*, c.1670, oil on canvas, 125.7x100cm

Tai Shan Schierenberg on...

LUCIAN FREUD'S *JOHN MINTON*, 1952

I'd just started at St Martin's School of Art, and having been rather isolated in the deepest Black Forest in Germany where I grew up, was suddenly confronted with all this new art and these new artists I hadn't heard of. I first came across this portrait in a Freud catalogue I found in the library, but he wasn't considered very interesting at the time by my tutors.

Everything about this portrait is surprising and marvellous: from the extraordinary elongated vertical format, which gives this sensitive and painting immense monumentality, to the translucent luminosity of the tones in the face. People often think that painting from life amounts to reacting to what's in front of you and recording it faithfully. What Freud shows in this picture is the reinvention in his process – he has observed Minton acutely and reconstituted him in paint in the most revelatory and truthful way possible.

By the time this portrait was made, Minton – a gifted draughtsman, set designer and teacher – felt himself being side-lined from the general flow of the art world which was increasingly turning towards abstraction. He suffered progressively from psychological problems and turned increasingly to drink. He committed suicide at the age of 40. This portrait certainly gets the conflicted and overly sensitive nature of the sitter across, but as one senses the impending nervous breakdown, it is not as a voyeur but as a fellow traveller.

Painting portraits can lead an artist into the cul-de-sac of running after a likeness rather than making a good painting. Freud shows us that one painting can combine the two: capturing the specific idiosyncrasies of the sitter whilst simultaneously illuminating the shared human experience with beautiful reinvention and painting. It is incredibly difficult to pull off, but having this painting as a reference point helps me recalibrate when I wander off course.

Tai is a *BP Portrait Award* winner, a Sky Arts *Portrait Artist of the Year* judge and head of painting at the Art Academy, London. www.taishanschierenberg.com

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART, LONDON, UK / © THE LUCIAN FREUD ARCHIVE / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

"EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS PORTRAIT IS SURPRISING AND MARVELLOUS, FROM THE VERTICAL FORMAT TO THE LUMINOSITY OF THE FACE"

James Hall on...

ISAAC FULLER'S *ISAAC FULLER*, C.1670

I'm writing an essay on portraits of artists accompanied by antique sculptures that seem to be alive, and this is a stunning example by the printmaker and painter Isaac Fuller.

It's a pioneering example of a British artist trying to make a portrait with a dramatic and intriguing narrative – it's a precursor to Hogarth and Reynolds.

I love the play of rippling reds and golds, which gives it a feverish molten quality. Fuller is both majestic and melancholic – look at those glinting, watery eyes.

The self-portrait also includes the artist's son and I think Fuller was trying to give his young son some sex education. His right hand gently cradles a cast of the startled head of the Medici Venus, who epitomised 'modest' nudity. Fuller's left hand grabs the head of a bronze satyr as if to hide and suffocate him. He's saying, 'Now my boy, don't ravish or lust after women like a satyr – protect and cherish them'. There was fat chance in the age of Charles II and I think that's why Fuller looks tearful: he knows it's all wishful thinking.

James is an art historian and author of *The Self-Portrait: A Cultural History*, published by Thames & Hudson, RRP £18.95. www.thamesandhudson.com >

“I LIKE TO THINK OF SARGENT’S *LADY AGNEW OF LOCHNAW* AS SCOTLAND’S *MONA LISA*”

“THE COMPOSITION REALLY STANDS OUT HERE... THE MIRRORS ARE A CLEVER DEVICE AND THE POSITIONING OF THE HANDS IS A MASTERSTROKE”

ABOVE David Cobley, *Ken Dodd*, 2004, oil on linen, 76.2x91.4cm
LEFT John Singer Sargent, *Lady Agnew of Lochnaw*, 1892, oil on canvas, 127x101cm

PHOTO CREDIT: NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND: © NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

Ewan McNaughton on...

JOHN SINGER SARGENT'S *LADY AGNEW OF LOCHNAW*, 1892

I discovered this portrait on my first trip to the Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh. I remember it could be seen through the archway from two galleries away and I bypassed them both to look at it more closely.

Although technically John Singer Sargent was American, he spent most of his life in Britain so I will always consider this portrait a British painting. For me its significance lies in its mood, its interaction with the viewer. It is a great reminder that a good portrait is not about just the subject or the artist, but the dynamic or interaction between the two. It's also the painting that started Sargent's career in Britain. It has a lot of sentimental value to a lot of art lovers and I think of it as Scotland's *Mona Lisa*.

Sargent was an expert at making things look like they were painted energetically while still retaining a high level of control and consideration. Some details on the face are highly worked whereas the floral pattern on the chair is simply implied with a few strokes. It is the perfect marriage of technical ability and artistic consideration. As an academically trained painter, he could certainly bring the whole thing to a more realistic finish but he chooses his battles well and remembers the greater impact of the painting as a whole. When he has said what needs to be said on any given area of the canvas, it's finished.

This painting is always a strong reminder for me that there is very much two sides to a painting: there is the execution and theory side, and there is the engagement with the viewer. I've often seen paintings take one extreme or the other. Some are technically excellent but leave the non-painter apathetic – a bit like how only guitar players really appreciate long guitar solos. Conversely, I've seen paintings where the idea or concept is very strong but they are let down by a lack of skill in realising it.

When teaching at the Academy of Realist Art, I encourage students to push technical skill as far as they can with the understanding that they should pick and choose a level of finish or a particular technique that is individual to either their style or the subject they are painting outside of their academic studies. Working academically everyday means I have to give myself a little reminder to maybe loosen the grip on the brush once in a while, or find the beauty in a brushstroke just as it is. Sargent's portrait has taught me to look at my work through fresh eyes, and that sometimes a beautiful melody is more appealing than a squealing guitar solo.

Ewan is a classical portrait painter and founder of the Academy of Realist Art in Edinburgh. www.academyofrealistart.co.uk

Steve Pill on...

DAVID COBLEY'S *KEN DODD*, 2004

David Cobley's portrait of comedian Ken Dodd is not a rousing image. It is never going to inspire the patriotism of a Churchill portrait or capture the glamour of a Sargent muse, but to my mind it remains one of the most perfectly pitched and quintessentially British portraits imaginable.

From an artist's point of view, there is much to admire here, but it is the composition that really stands out. The use of mirrors is a clever device, as the ageing Dodd 'diminishes' before our very eyes, but it is the positioning of the hands which is Cobley's real masterstroke. The reflections reach out to one another and draw the eye deep into the picture plane. Couple this with the miniature 'ashtray and pint of ale' still life and Dodd's deflated backstage pose, and you have a grim, honest and strangely compelling account of an iconic entertainer and all his imperfections.

Steve is the editor of *Artists & Illustrators*

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Artists & ILLUSTRATORS

ARTISTS OF THE YEAR 2015

WITH £10,000 OF PRIZES AND MORE CHANCES TO WIN THAN EVER BEFORE, MAKE SURE YOU DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE FOR OUR COMPETITION

The *Artists & Illustrators* Artists of the Year competition is an annual search for fresh painting, drawing and printmaking talent, a chance for young, maturing or just underappreciated artists to win prizes and gain national exposure for their work.

For our eighth instalment this year, we have more chances to win than ever before – with prizes ranging from cash and art materials to courses and gallery representation. The overall winner of this year's competition will receive a £1,000 cash prize and gallery representation from London's Panter & Hall with the chance to work towards his or her own solo exhibition. 50 shortlisted artworks will also be displayed at a special exhibition held at Mall Galleries, London SW1, from 22-27 February 2016.

And don't forget, if you are a member of our Portfolio Plus scheme, you can enter multiple artworks free of charge. Not signed up? Visit www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/register and join from as little as £2.49 per month.

JUDGING

Submissions close at midday on 10 September 2015. A shortlist of artworks will be drawn up by our panel of judges, which includes Tiffany Hall of Panter & Hall and *Artists & Illustrators* editor Steve Pill. Readers will then have the chance to vote for their favourite shortlisted works at www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk.

PRIZES

The creator of the overall winning artwork will be crowned our Artist of the Year and receive both a £1,000 cash prize and gallery representation courtesy of Panter & Hall. Situated on London's Pall Mall, this prestigious institution topped a list of the "world's best private art galleries" in *The Telegraph* and will offer one artist the chance to join

their portfolio of established British and international talents, and potentially work towards a solo exhibition. Our other prizes include:

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- £500 worth of printmaking supplies from Intaglio Printmaker
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- £500 worth of watercolour paper from Clairefontaine
- £500 cash prize courtesy of Derwent
- £500 worth of art classes at the London Atelier of Representational Art
- £500 of vouchers for Maimeri products
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- £500 worth of giclée prints from Gemini Digital Colour

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HOW TO ENTER

You can enter the competition in one of two ways:

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Take a digital photo of your artwork(s). Go to our website at **www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/2015**. Select whether or not you are a member of Portfolio Plus – if so, entry is free! Complete the form, taking care to fill in all requested fields, attach your artworks (up to a maximum of nine per form) and complete your payment information (if applicable). Select the "Submit" button to send us your entries.

2. BY POST

Complete the form opposite and post it, along with a photo or print of your artwork (and cheque if applicable), to:

Artists of the Year 2015, *Artists & Illustrators*,
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Jubilee House, 2 Jubilee Place, London SW3 3TQ

Please do not send your original artwork at this time – instead send prints of your work, no larger than A4 in size. Originals must be available for the exhibition from 22-27 February 2016, otherwise the work will be disqualified. The closing date for all entries is noon on 10 September 2015.

Entries will only be accepted in one or more of the following mediums: all water-based mediums (including watercolours), oils, acrylics, gouache, all drawing mediums (including pastels and charcoal), collage and all forms of printmaking. Digital art is not accepted. If your artwork is based on photographic reference material, you must either own the copyright to the image(s) or be able to produce written permission from the copyright holder. You may enter multiple times, but please complete a separate form for each entry. Photocopies of the form are accepted.

PHOTO: SEAN MALYON

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IN THE STUDIO WITH

CHRISTABEL KING

ONE OF THE WORLD'S TOP BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS, CHRISTABEL HAS SPENT 40 YEARS WORKING IN-HOUSE AT THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, KEW.
WORDS AND PHOTOS: **STEVE PILL**

How did you begin your career in botanical art?
My background and training are more scientific: my degree was in botany. We did draw things under the microscope but imagination was not to the fore – it was all about drawing what you see. After graduating, I worked at a nursery for a year to earn money and then I did two years at Middlesex Polytechnic, which was where I learnt watercolour technique. I was thrilled that I was able to paint – it was what I wanted to do, even if my father hadn't been keen on me doing art at school.

When did your association with Kew begin?
That came in 1975. After my two years at Middlesex Poly, I prepared a portfolio and wrote to the Natural History Museum and a couple of other places to ask if they had any work. The Natural History Museum didn't have any jobs but they sent me to Kew. I got a part-time job as assistant to the editor of *Curtis's Botanical* [Kew's in-house magazine] and the rest of the time I was making illustrations for the magazine. I've worked here ever since and I've been very satisfied. The techniques are the same but the plants are always different.

Tell us about your workspace?
I'm currently working on a desk in the Herbarium. There are seven million samples in the archives here, divided by geographical origin. Most of the samples are dried, but there are also liquid-preserved specimens.

How does a typical illustration begin?
It begins with the sample. Sometimes I take them from the archive and sometimes I find them in the gardens. I bring the sample here, fix it up on the stand and start

drawing. For the black-and-white dissection drawings, I will often use the microscope.

Keeping cut samples looking fresh must be hard. Does that bring a time restriction?

It certainly does. I think the worst plants only last an hour or two, but thankfully there aren't many of those. Most usually last for a day. I picked this one on the desk yesterday – it's already lost one petal and one bud, but that's normal.

Are you particular about your tools?

Yes. I like good sable brushes. The Winsor & Newton Series 7 is a favourite. I use Rosemary & Co. via mail order as well – they provide reasonably priced sable brushes that I buy in quantities for my students. A size 2, 4 and 6 is enough to create a good botanical painting.

Do you need a smaller brush for details?

No, a good brush should come to a fine point, even if it's quite large. My favourite is the size 6 because you can load the brush with paint. With smaller ones, you can't cover a large area in one go.

Good quality paper must be important too?

Yes, I've used Fabriano Classico 5 Hot Pressed paper for as long as I've been painting. I like the very white quality of the paper. For plates being published, the colour reproduction is much better too.

The illustrations are made for scientific purposes. Does that mean you have to show certain things?

Yes, the editor of the magazine and the botanist who writes the article will both vet the design to see that everything is included. If there's a special feature that they don't want left out, they will ask.

You regularly teach Brazilian students at Kew. How did that connection come about?

In 1990, there was an exhibition by Margaret Mee, a botanical artist and explorer was known for her trips to the Amazon. She sadly died in a car accident during the exhibition and the Margaret Mee Fellowship was set up in her memory to enable Brazilian artists and botanists to study at Kew. A student called Gustavo is here now. I suggest suitable plants for him to paint based on points of difficulty. At the end of the five months, he will put on a one-day exhibition here in the Herbarium.

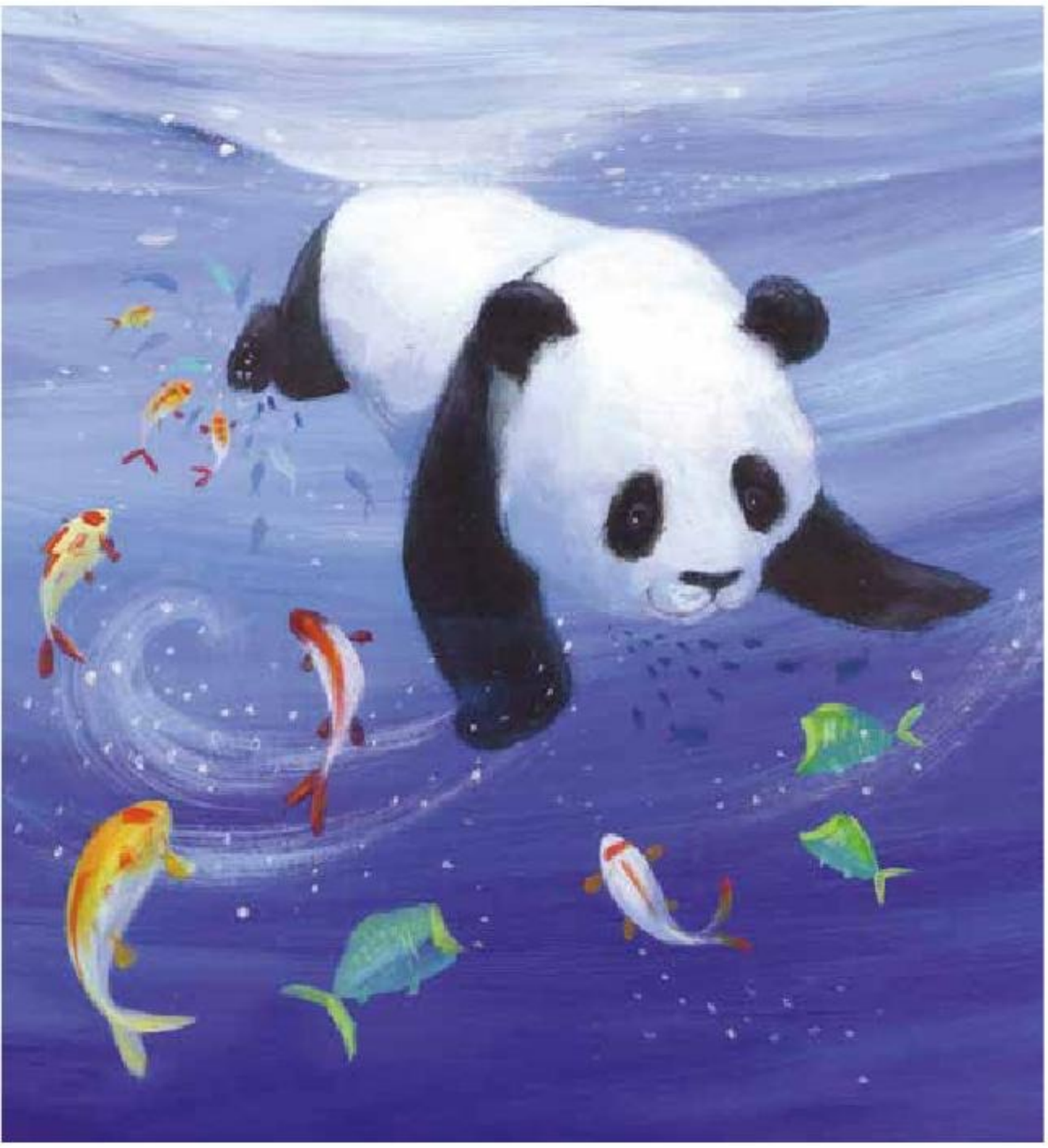
If someone is new to botanical art, are there certain plants you would recommend starting with?

Plants in pots with roots are always a good way to start, as they will last longer than a cut sample. Tulips are one of the best things for beginners to start on as well. A tulip is such a good, strong shape and the outline doesn't take too long to draw. Students can then add as much detail as they want.

***The Kew Book of Botanical Illustration* by Christabel King is published by Search Press, £19.99. www.searchpress.com**

Split personality

CAN YOU BE BOTH A VERSATILE COMMERCIAL ILLUSTRATOR AND A SINGLE-MINDED FINE ARTIST AT THE SAME TIME? **CAROLINE PEDLER** THINKS SO AND SHE HAS BEEN BALANCING BOTH DISCIPLINES BEAUTIFULLY, AS **JENNY WHITE** DISCOVERS



FROM FAR LEFT
Drawn to Swords, acrylic on printed paper, 14.8x21cm; *Desire*, acrylic on printed paper, 14.8x21cm; *A Friend Like You*, acrylic on card, 26x28cm; Caroline in her garden studio with pet dog, Bobo

Look for Caroline Pedler's work online and you may conclude that there are two artists with the same name: one, a prolific and versatile illustrator of children's books and the other, a bold painter of fine art in the spirit of Cy Twombly and Antoni Tàpies.

These are, in fact, two sides of the same person. The Truro-born artist has created bright and colourful illustrations for some 50 children's books, yet over the past four years she has also developed her own darker, more personal style of painting, too. And rather than dividing her time or one taking preference over the other, these two strands have instead enriched her practice and given her an outlet for all sides of her personality.

Caroline's remarkable double-edged career began with her studying illustration at Falmouth School of Art and the University of Portsmouth, before she took time out to go travelling in Hong Kong, Bali and Australia. Those experiences abroad transformed her palette and helped to kick start her career as a professional illustrator. "It was so colourful out there that when I came back and created my portfolio, it was full of colour," she says.

In 1997, Hallmark Cards sat up and took notice, and Caroline has since been in continuous employment, first creating greetings cards and then illustrating children's books. The popularity of her work for stories such as David Bedford's *Bedtime for Little Bears!* and Julia Hubery's *A Friend Like You* has resulted in 30,000 Caroline Pedler-illustrated books being borrowed from libraries in the last year alone. Likewise, in her pretty home just outside Falmouth, the bookshelves groan with dozens upon dozens of different titles – a riot of colour, fun and imagination.

Many of the books that Caroline has worked on, including the recent *Badger and the Great Storm*, have been published by Little Tiger Press, who she credits with helping to develop her style. "When I started out, my illustrations were all drybrush and very heavy," she explains. "Little Tiger worked with me quite hard to get me to loosen up."

These days Caroline switches between styles effortlessly, tailoring her approach to different commissions. Surprisingly, however, this is not something she recommends when teaching students at Plymouth College of Art. "I'm always telling my students not to have too many styles, but it's worked to my favour in that I do get bored doing the same thing every time," she says.

That versatility took another leap forward in 2009 when she decided to undertake an MA in illustration and >

"MY FINE ART IS AN ANTIDOTE TO MY COMMERCIAL ILLUSTRATION WORK I LOVE DOING THE BRIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS BUT I NEED THAT TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS"

authorial practice at Falmouth University, partly with a view to writing her own books. "I needed something to change and I went onto that MA thinking I would write [my own] children's book. I've been illustrating other people's books for 16 years now and I sometimes can't help but think that I would write the stories differently. I also felt it would be nice to have the proper me in my books. What actually ended up happening was that the MA opened up a completely different side of me."

That side is free, sometimes anarchic, and often darker than her bright, cheery illustrations. Caroline used it to explore work more in keeping with some of her artistic heroes, including the aforementioned Twombly and Tàpies, as well as the likes of Robert Rauschenberg, David Hockney, Mary Newcomb and contemporary illustrator Laura Carlin. To provide an outlet for the work, the Cornish artist has founded her own imprint. "I've called it An-ti-dote Press, because all the work I do off the back of my MA is an antidote to my commercial illustration work. I love doing the bright illustrations but I need that to be able to do this other work. At the moment, it's nice having the two sides to what I do."

Printed in editions of just 25 each, her self-published books stretch the boundaries of contemporary illustration, frequently crossing over into fine art. Some of them are best described as picture books for grown-ups, while others point towards the way she would like to write children's books.

The subject matter is diverse across the six titles released so far. *The Extra-Ordinary Events of Walking The Dog* is a relatively straightforward daily journal of walks in the local fields and coastal paths, while the more surreal catalogue *The Royal Beasts of Bialowitza* sees bears emerge from wild and messy brushstrokes or sit in dainty teacups. It's clear that the books have allowed Caroline to give her imagination and creativity free rein. "I make time for this work between books," she says. "When a book is finished, I'll treat myself: I'll tidy the studio and then just scruff around in my sketchbooks."

It's a welcome release from the rigours of the illustration work. In the past 12 months Caroline has completed no less than five books, which has required her to complete a double-page spread on average every single working day. "I start each day early and don't really stop until I've finished. If the illustration is a bit more detailed it will take a little bit longer. The only downfall of the commercial work is the deadlines. Sometimes you're working until midnight then up again in the morning and doing the same again."

However, it would be simplistic to say that her newfound way of working is the real Caroline Pedler and that her commercial work is just pretence. "There is a lot of me in

TOP LEFT *Keeping Up with the Jones's*, acrylic on printed paper, 14.8x21cm
ABOVE *My Religion*, acrylic and pencil on paper, 14.8x21cm

"I ENROLLED ON A MASTERS COURSE THINKING I WOULD WRITE MY OWN CHILDREN'S BOOK... IT ACTUALLY OPENED UP A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SIDE OF ME"

my commercial work," she says firmly. "It is very influenced by *Watership Down*, Disney, Winnie-the-Pooh – all those things from my childhood. My drawings can be very much like that – it's one side of me.

"The way I write, however, is naturally is more poetic; there is space in there, it's a bit more ambiguous. I'm beginning to feel there's a proper divide between that and the commercial work, and I suspect that the children's books I want to do will fit more in the fine art side than into the commercial side."

In keeping with this fine art slant, Caroline has begun to exhibit her work now, including a solo show at Penzance's Newlyn Art Gallery last October. She plans to show her work at the Affordable Art Fair too. "I'm going to see what comes from that and also just keep feeding the website that features that work, with the aim of making it strong enough to pay its own way."

An-ti-dote Press will play an important part in documenting these ongoing developments, as she intends to produce a book after every exhibition. "Each book is like a full stop, a punctuation mark at the end of the show, and a prize for creating that body of work."

Caroline is currently in the process of creating a large studio in her back garden, which will enable her to move her work into a bigger space. It's a shift that chimes well with her expansive mood and the sense that she has started to explore a newer, bigger creative landscape.

That said, she still treasures her commercial illustration work, and it looks likely that this will benefit from her creative experiments rather than being overtaken by them. Earlier this year she went to the Bologna Children's Book Fair in Italy with Little Tiger Press and the experience was a highlight of her long and productive career to date.

"I felt so proud to be part of this whole thing, and I don't think I would ever want to stop doing children's books," she says. "This is something I love: I love the process, I love the thumbnails, I love seeing the finished product. It's always rewarding.

"As for the other work," she adds, tantalisingly, "I may go down the path of publishing something very different under a pseudonym."

Establishing two parallel careers in both fine art and illustration is no mean feat, but it is one that this talented individual appears more than able to balance beautifully for many years to come.

www.carolinepedler.co.uk, www.an-ti-dotepress.co.uk

BELOW *Who's Afraid of Big Bad Bunny?*, acrylic on card, 26x28cm

BOTTOM RIGHT *A Friend Like You*, acrylic on card, 26x28cm

THE £50 MILLION

ARTIST?

PRIVATE COLLECTION / © THE LUCIAN FREUD ARCHIVE / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

THE STAR OF LUCIAN FREUD'S MOST VALUABLE PORTRAIT IS HOLDING HER OWN EXHIBITION. **SUE TILLEY** TELLS **STEVE PILL** HOW A MOST REMARKABLE CHAIN OF EVENTS GOT HER HERE

In her fourth-floor flat in London's Bethnal Green, Sue Tilley is explaining what it was like to sit for Lucian Freud, a painter with the reputation of being one of the most unnerving, demanding and talented artists of his generation.

"He was hilarious," she says. "The most hilarious person you've ever met in your life. I sometimes nearly fell off the sofa laughing. I mean some days he'd be quiet, but other days, the things he'd come out with..."

She shakes her head. "He was just so *blunt*."

Across the course of the hour we spend together, Sue backs up this claim with several potentially libellous stories about things Freud said. "I love people who just say what they think," she says. "I'm a bit frightened of doing that."

Between 1993 and 1996, Sue worked in the local Job Centre but would visit Freud's Notting Hill studio every weekend and on occasional days off too. Unlike many of his more psychologically probing head studies, his paintings of the woman affectionately known as 'Big Sue' were studies in form and flesh. Two of the portraits have since been sold for a combined total of more than £50 million. In 2008, *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping* set a world record for a work sold at auction by a (then) living artist when it fetched £17.2 million, while *Benefits Supervisor Resting* sold for £35.6 million in May of this year. "I remember going to Tate Gallery [now Tate Britain] on a school outing, never thinking that one day I'd be on the walls of all the galleries," she says.

Sue was paid just £20 for the initial sittings, but Freud would regularly take her out for expensive lunches. "I think we just got on," she says. "Most of the girls who worked for him were quite airy fairy, intellectual kind of types, which I'm not, I'm just chit-chatty and whatever."

Sue has no plans to join several of Freud's former sitters in writing about the experience (though she recommends Geordie Greig's *Breakfast with Lucian*: "It can't all be true!" she hoots) and refuses to charge for her regular media appearances, instead preferring to embrace every opportunity presented to her. "I always tell people: 'Say yes, don't say no. It'll be an adventure, you never know what will happen'," she says, brightly. >

"I REMEMBER GOING TO TATE ON A SCHOOL OUTING, NEVER THINKING THAT ONE DAY I'D BE ON THE WALLS"

It is a sequence of such positive responses that have lead to Sue's latest challenge: making the switch from subject to artist. The unlikely chain of events began when Sue agreed to model for a life class at the National Portrait Gallery during its 2012 Freud retrospective. One of the participants ran his own workshops near Sue's home and he invited her along. "I amazed myself because I forgot I could draw," she says. "When I was a young girl, art was my favourite thing. I used to make my mum have drawing competitions between me and my sister, but because I was four years older than her I knew I'd always win."

Sue got a grade A at art A Level and trained as an art teacher, but, she says, "You know what life is like, you drift into something else". Determined to make up for lost time, she agreed to make some drawings for the programme for *Fashion Victim – The Musical*, a small production created by her friend, Toby Rose. Eager for publicity, he contacted the *Observer* and a journalist promptly called Sue to ask some questions. "I imagined it would be a paragraph but it was a colour spread. I was mortified."

On the newspaper's website, the reader's comments ranged from the supportive to the bitter, with Sue taking one particular person to task for their negative attitude. Her plucky response in turn caught the eye of a gallerist who offered her a solo exhibition. "I'd drawn about six pictures by this point, but at the same time I'm a great one for taking an opportunity. I thought I might as well, mightn't I?"

With 600 square metres of gallery space to fill, Sue plans to make 100 drawings. The Portuguese artist Rui Ferreira has become something of a mentor, regularly texting her bizarre suggestions for scenarios to draw. She also plans to make portraits of her close family and key scenes throughout her life so far, including several pictures of Lucian, though she is reluctant to reveal whether she picked up any studio tips from him. "I haven't got the patience he's got," she says, by way of an answer. "I couldn't spend nine months on one picture. I haven't got that in me, that I'm so obsessed with something that I could devote my life to it completely. I'm too easily distracted."

TOP RIGHT Sue Tilley puts the finishing touches to her *Self-Portrait* (above)
RIGHT *Sue's Cousin*, pastel on paper, 42x29.7cm
PREVIOUS SPREAD Lucian Freud, *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping*, oil on canvas, 151.3x219cm

Sue's own style is unashamedly naïve, but what it lacks in technique, it makes up for in charm, personality and eccentricity. She took voluntary redundancy from the Job Centre last month and now rents a studio nearby to devote more time to her art. "I don't want people to think that I think I'm the greatest artist on earth, but if people gave me little commissions to do drawings, I'd be very happy."

Luck and serendipity have clearly played a part in getting Sue to this point, but her irrepressible ability to leave herself open to new opportunities, and embrace them if they come along, should not be underestimated. Besides, if the exhibition doesn't turn out quite as she plans, she has a surefire way of keeping her spirits up. "If I'm feeling a bit rubbish, I just remind myself that I'm the most expensive woman in the world."

She lets out a hearty laugh.

"Whatever happens, I've got that."

Sue's exhibition runs from 1 October to 8 November at the Smokehouse Gallery, London E3. www.smokehousegallery.org

"IF I'M FEELING A BIT RUBBISH, I JUST REMIND MYSELF THAT I'M THE MOST EXPENSIVE WOMAN IN THE WORLD"

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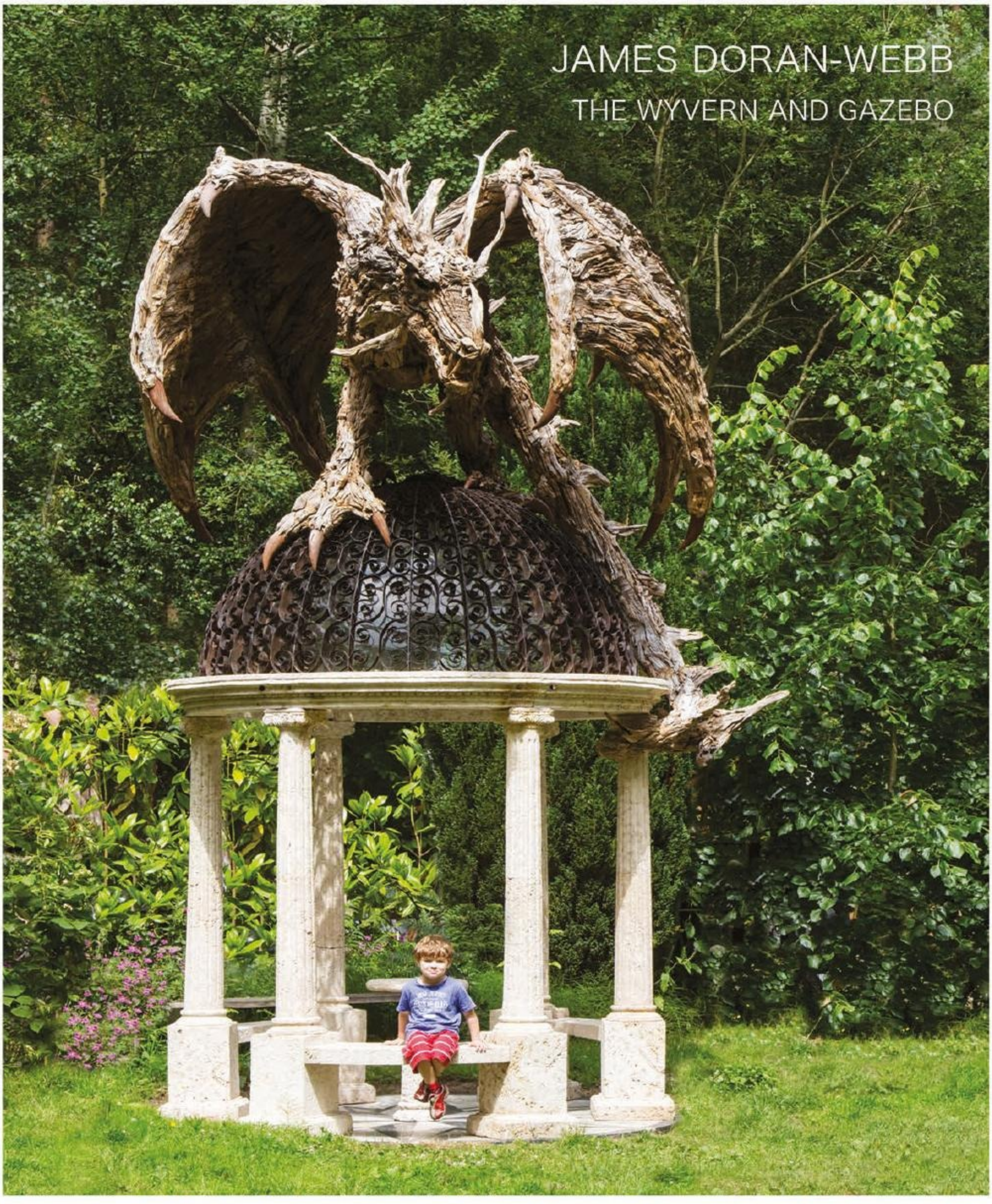

THE WORKING ARTIST

PRESENTATION IS KEY IF YOU WANT TO SELL YOUR ART. IT'S TIME TO WISE UP ABOUT FRAMING, SAYS OUR COLUMNIST **LAURA BOSWELL**

We all devote plenty of time and energy to creating our artworks, but it's worth putting some careful consideration into the finishing touches too. The way in which you display your artwork can have a huge impact on your audience, especially if you are showing several pieces together. If you frame your work, the choice of wood, mount and finish is particularly important – the right frame can often make or break a sale.

It is important to think about your individual style and also what you want your framing to say about you as an artist. My approach as a printmaker is to have a sort of "house style" that consists of plain ash frames with double cream mounts. The mouldings vary, but the materials stay the same and the simplicity of the framing suits the style of my prints. In contrast, I have a painter friend who incorporates his frames into the actual paintings. For him, each frame is unique and all are equally flamboyant. While the finished products vary greatly, we've both considered our work as a whole and thought through our framing with great care.

Some galleries include advice for framing on their websites, giving you an idea of the real no-nos. My advice is to be consistent and avoid using a mishmash of styles, unless that is the very statement you intend to make. A random mix of frames can look weak and detract from the work. I would also avoid coloured mounts (as this is a very personal choice) and pure white ones too (unless you want a stark contrast to your work).

Getting an artwork framed can be expensive. The three options you have are: buy a readymade frame, use a professional framer or make the frame yourself. If you buy readymade frames, your work should sit in correct proportion to the frame; a bad size match will look amateurish. Likewise, if you use a framer then it makes financial sense to agree a set size most of the time. As always, it pays to shop around and, if you see another frame that you admire, to ask fellow artists whom they use.

If you intend to frame a painting yourself then it is important to do as professional a job as possible. There are excellent framing and mount-cutting courses available to help you with this. Inevitably you will need to invest in some kit and be prepared to store materials. On the plus side, deciding to frame for yourself will save money in the long run, give you absolute control and the freedom to frame work to any size you wish.

www.lauraboswell.co.uk

> "THE RIGHT FRAME CAN OFTEN MAKE OR BREAK A SALE"

ABOVE *Wombwell Farm,* Japanese woodblock print, 78x51.5cm

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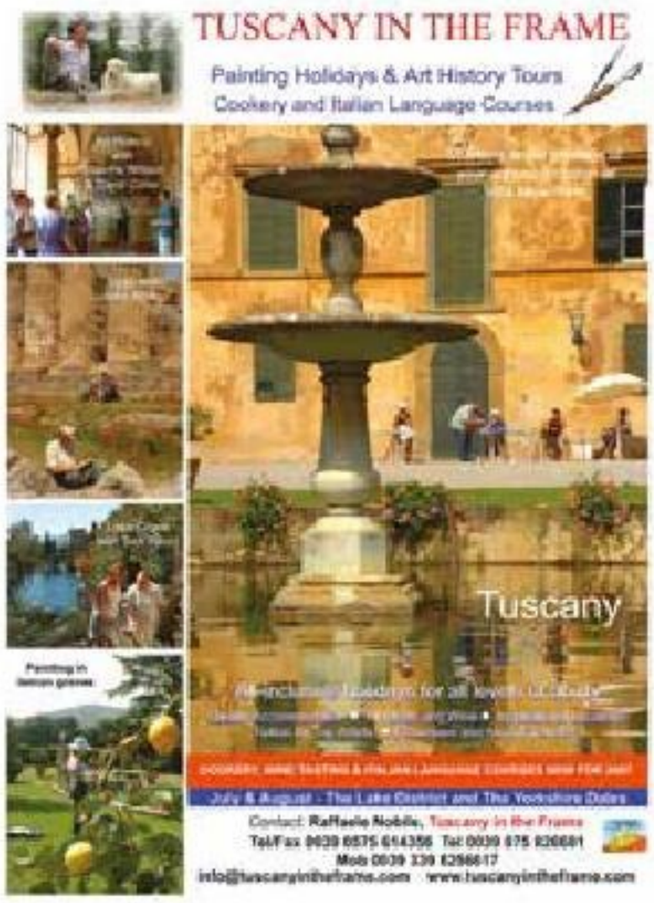
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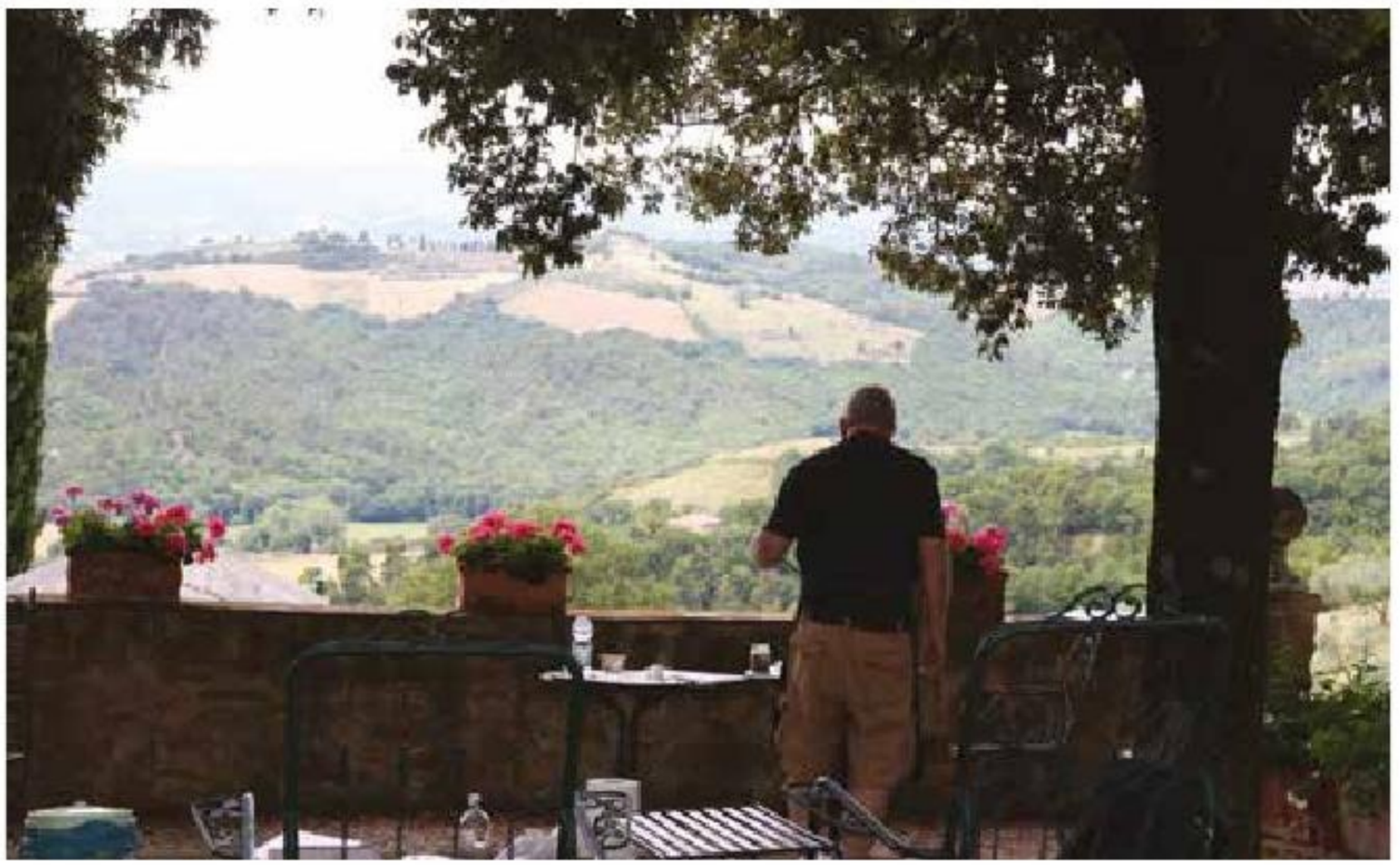

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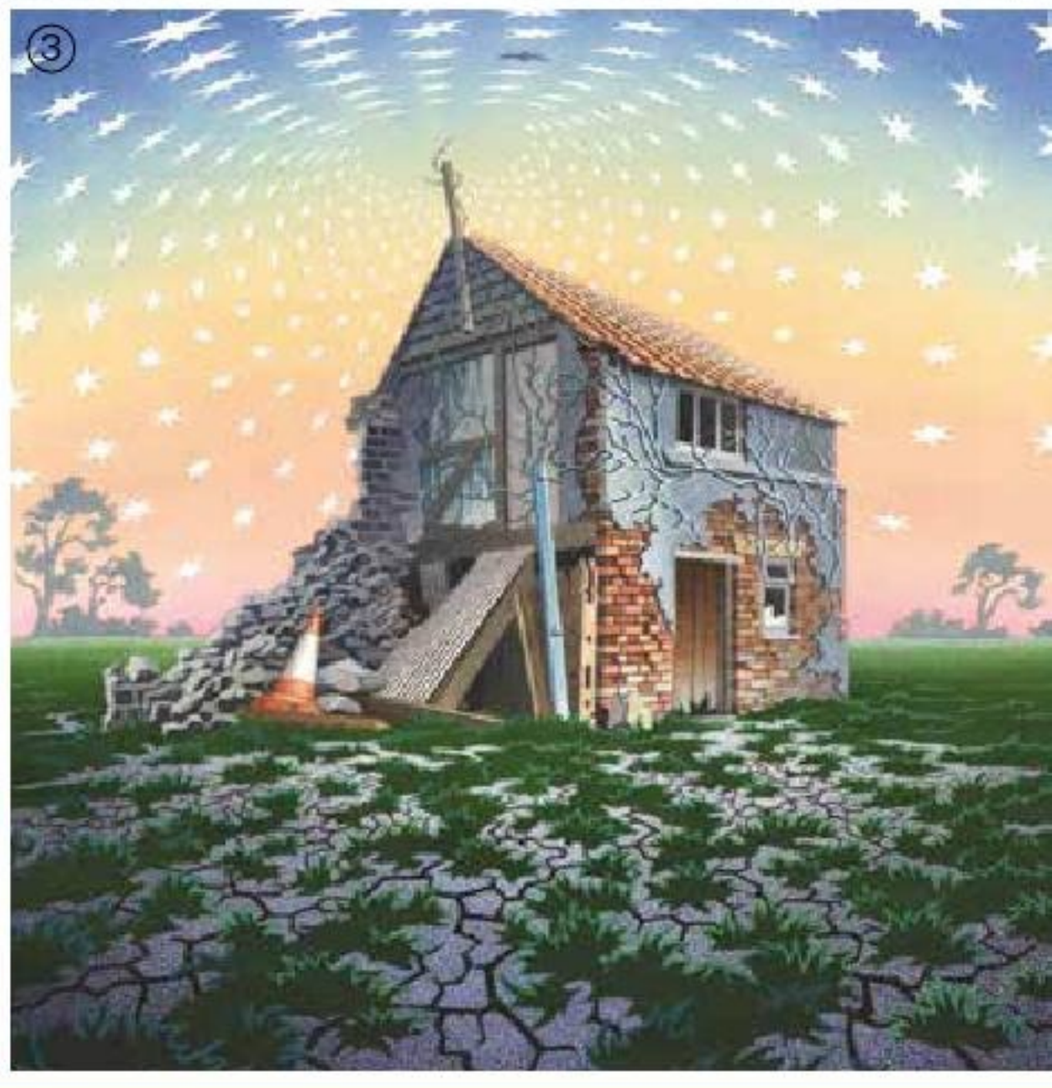
THE GALLERY

This month, we've picked out another selection of great paintings submitted to our Artists of the Year 2015 competition by members of our Portfolio Plus scheme. Not a member yet? Sign up today at **www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/register**



1. Andrea Abraham, *Warren.* www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/andrea-abraham • 2. Susan Lynch, *Wild Bunch.* www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/artfinder • 3. David Alderslade, *Little Owl.* www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/davidalderslade • 4. Karen Smith, *Consternation.* www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/karen-smith

• 5. Kay Ashton, *Hot Toddy.* www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/kayashton • 6. Rebecca Barnard, *Old Orchard, Spring Blossom.* www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/rebeccabarnard • 7. Alice Hole, *Newlyn Harbour View.* www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/alicehole

TALKING TECHNIQUES

SHIRLEY TREVENA

WITH A NEW BOOK THAT LOOKS BACK ON 30 YEARS OF VIBRANT, COLOURFUL PAINTINGS, THIS AWARD-WINNING ARTIST SHARES HER RULE-BREAKING METHODS WITH **STEVE PILL**

Aside from a shock of coloured hair every bit as bright and bold as one of her still life paintings, there is not much else to suggest that Shirley Trevena is one of life's mavericks. Nevertheless, in the relatively traditional and law-abiding world of watercolour painting, she stands alone: challenging conventional wisdom, proudly flaunting the art school system, putting colours in places other artists would never dream of.

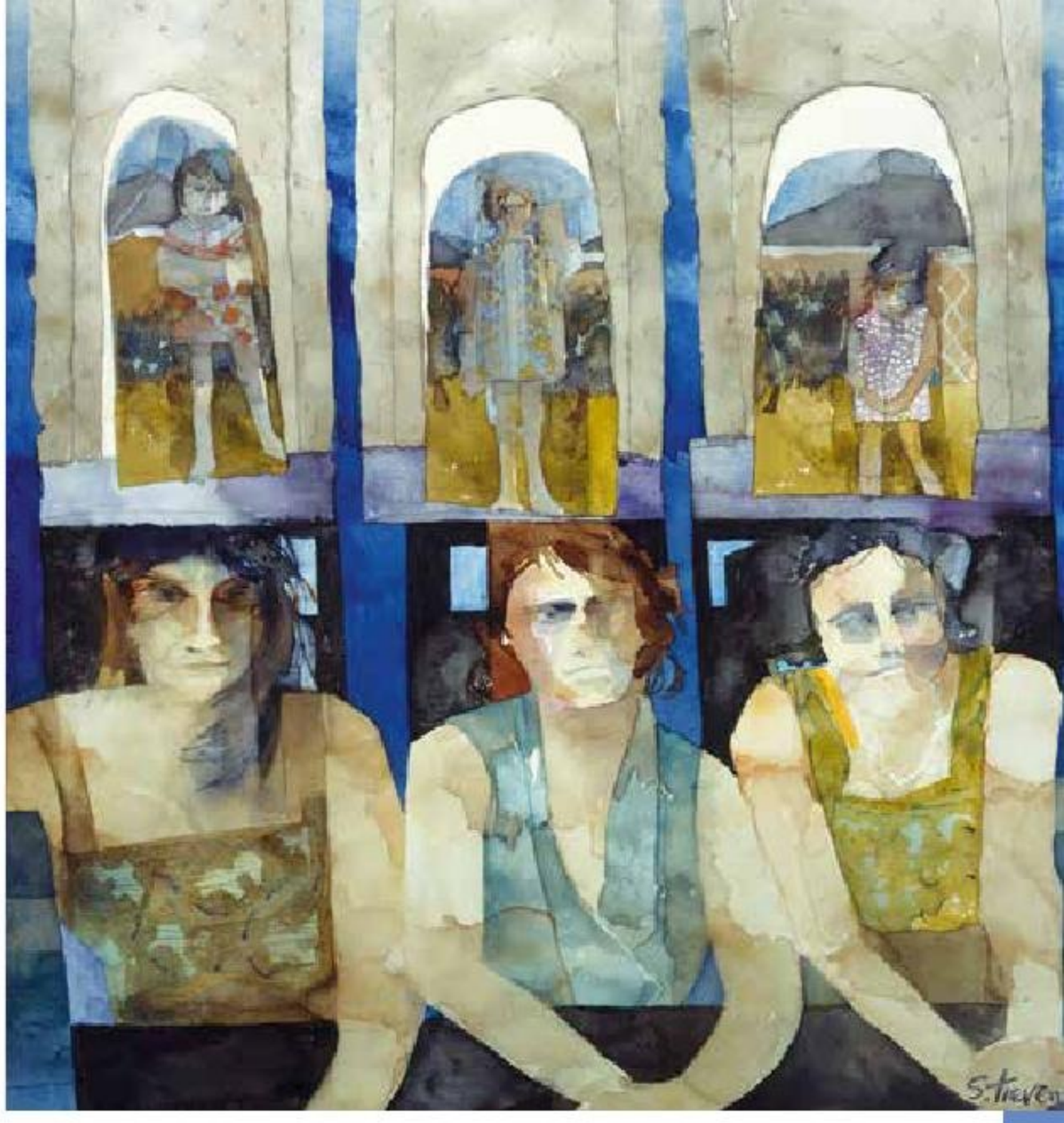
Of course, we're being a little facetious here, but the point remains. Shirley is living proof that it is the quality of the paintings alone that matter when it comes to establishing yourself as a successful, professional artist. Destined, she says, to work in an office from a young age, the 74-year-old eschewed any formal training but instead dedicated herself to refining her own skills.

Today she is one of the most collectable watercolour artists working in the UK and equally respected by the establishment as an active member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour and the President of the Sussex Watercolour Society.

Likewise, her three practical watercolour books to date are not so much how-to guides as they are licenses to experiment with the medium. *Taking Risks with Watercolour* and *Vibrant Watercolours* both attempted to empower the reader as much as inform them, while 2012's hugely popular *Breaking the Rules of Watercolour* took things a step further still.

Discussing 10 of her paintings, she touched on supposedly taboo subjects such as using black watercolours (traditionally thought of as a surefire way of muddying colour mixes), encouraging accidents and breaking the rules of perspective – the latter a move inspired by the Cubist paintings of Braque and Picasso. >

LEFT *Breakfast*, 1985, watercolour, pen and ink on paper, 26x32cm
RIGHT Shirley Trevena with her shelves of potential subjects



RIGHT *Three Friends*, 1993, watercolour on paper, 60x50cm
BELOW RIGHT *Plants and Glass Bottles*, 2012, watercolour on paper, 52x49cm
LEFT *Still Life Against a Patterned Cloth*, 1996, watercolour on paper, 55x51cm

While such single-mindedness is admirable, it also makes it difficult when it comes to pinning Shirley down to her own techniques. Perhaps the easiest question is: are there any rules of painting that she actually does stick to?

"Well, I suppose, strictly speaking I am nowhere near a true abstract painter so I have always stuck to the rules of the viewer having to recognise something in the painting. It might only be a cup or a flower, but it has to be something that they can latch onto so they can read the painting."

As it turns out, it is only when it comes to materials that Shirley keeps things the same from painting to painting. She is an ambassador for Daniel Smith watercolours and praises their ability to encourage happy accidents and granulate in rich and interesting ways. Saunders Waterford is her paper of choice too. "I use a lot of the very heavy 640gsm super white one they do now because I don't have to stretch it and I can just work straight onto it."

"I REMEMBER GOING TO A CÉZANNE EXHIBITION ONCE...

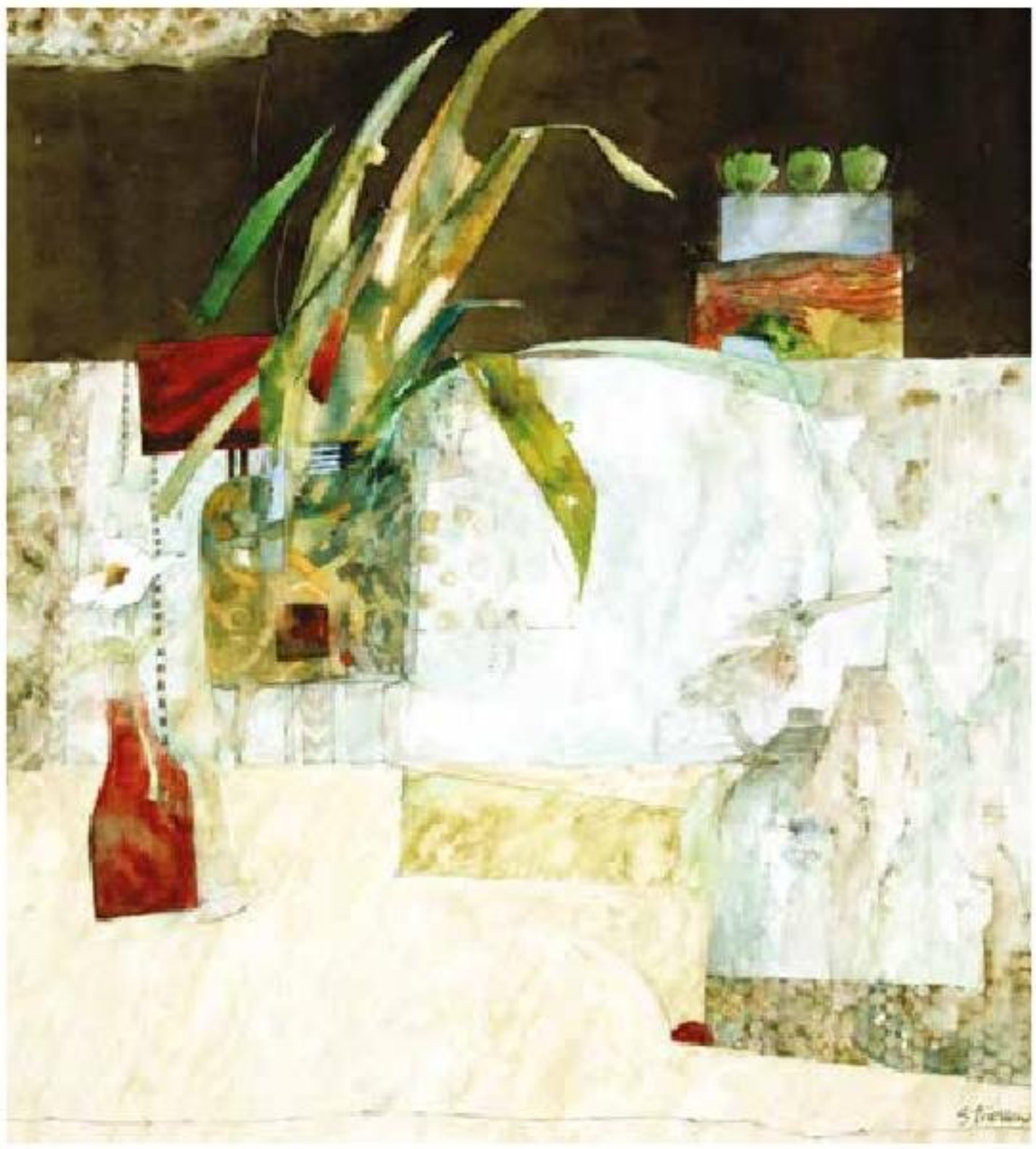
THE MOST INTERESTING PICTURES

WERE THE ONES THAT HE HADN'T FINISHED"

Aside from the particular materials, Shirley's approach to art is far more instinctive and innate. Her first full monograph, *Watercolours*, published this month by Batsford, picks out drawings from Shirley's childhood and in one particular picture, *The Tea Set*, drawn when she was aged just 9 or 10, she was already beginning to explore still life subjects from multiple angles. Even today she admits to going to bed and dreaming of potential colour combinations too.

Shirley points to *Fruit and Flowers Against a Blue Curtain*, the painting that adorns her latest Watercolours book, as an example of how her compositions develop organically. Almost by accident, several unconnected lines appeared to form an abstract square in the centre of the composition. Once the artist spotted the shape, she decided to accentuate it further. "That square changes the whole look of the painting and then you look down and there is another square that echoes it too. I'm very keen on putting these little things inside a composition to give it an edge and make it more interesting."

Another way in which Shirley has been attempting to add variety and interest to her paintings more recently is experimenting with a half-finished effect, blurring the lines between painting and drawing with passages of smudged graphite lines and bright watercolour washes in a single image. "I remember going to a Cézanne exhibition once and the most interesting pictures were the ones he hadn't finished – they were part painting and part drawing," she >



ABOVE *Crunchy Green Apples*, 2012, watercolour on paper, 34x40cm

says. "Works like that have got that immediacy, as if you are somehow connected straight through to the artist holding the pencil in their hand."

Later in the conversation, Shirley returns to this idea of whether a painting is "finished" or not. "People get stuck on it," she says. "I used to say to my students it's very interesting, it's very nice, but it's nowhere near finished because you have to go into the painting and tweak it: make more colours punchy or line things up, perhaps. It's those things at the end that make a big difference, when you realise that an area could take a darker yellow perhaps, maybe even go to orange. Making those decisions is the final stage for me, really."

Putting together the *Watercolour* book has given Shirley a welcome opportunity to take stock at how far she has come. Looking back at three decades of paintings as a professional artist was "a rollercoaster of emotions" and she recalls the difficulties of phases spent experimenting with unfamiliar subjects (a brief dalliance with landscape painting around the turn of the century) or techniques (a passing obsession with monoprints). The latter experience taught her a valuable lesson, however. "I learned that a picture doesn't have to have vibrant stimulating colours to be interesting," she says.

It is an approach that chimes with her current stated ambition: trying to pare back her compositions. "That's my desire at the moment," she says. "I think these paintings are getting far too complicated and I would like some quieter moments."

If you suggest that removing or blocking out colour is more difficult in watercolour than it is in other mediums, however, Shirley confirms her reputation as a rule-breaker and bristles at the suggestion: "Everybody says that once you've made a mark that's it, but I find that it's quite easy." The trick, she says, is lifting out colour with a small, sturdy brush. "When the paint is down, I just dip the brush in the water and slowly shave the colour off and blot it, then shave it off a bit more and blot it. It will water it down and you can get rid of it."

Shirley has always begun her paintings using the richest, fullest colours possible and then dealt with simplifying things later, an approach that is still evident on her more recent paintings, such as *Plants and Glass Bottles*. After taking stock on a colourful career, watercolour's inveterate rule-breaker may yearn for the simple life, but her work has lost none of its ability to dazzle and inspire.

***Shirley Trevena: Watercolours* is published by Batsford, RRP £25. www.shirleytrevena.com**

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Text by John Duncalfe. Foreword by Vivianne Light MA FRSA

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MASTERCLASS

BOLDER *brushwork*

KATE OSBORNE SHOWS YOU HOW TO USE A RANGE OF SWORD LINERS AND CHINESE BRUSHES TO MAKE AN EXPRESSIVE RESPONSE TO A BOUQUET OF WILD FLOWERS

Top tip

THE KEY TO WATERCOLOUR PAINTING IS PATIENCE – BE SELECTIVE, TAKE YOUR TIME AND DON'T OVERWORK THINGS

The painting in this demonstration was based on a very relaxed arrangement of both wild and cultivated flowers from my allotment. I liked the idea of treating the subject in a similar way, conveying a sense of the wonderful wild abundance.

My love of flowers and wildlife in general began as a child, on solitary walks in the Yorkshire countryside around Whitby and the North Yorkshire Moors, and it carried on through my training and practise as a textile designer in the 1970s and 80s. Over the years I have moved from fairly accurate and descriptive painting to something far looser, and the textile training has brought an expressive and informal approach to my use of colour.

In 40 years of painting, I have run the gamut of equipment and materials, and to anyone I would recommend a change from time to time: of paper surface, paint brand or brush type. It's amazing how this can inspire you anew and wake you up by altering the nature of the marks you make.

These days I use mostly Chinese brushes, as they lack the spring of a sable or a synthetic brush, and they produce a lot of texture when dragged across a rough paper. They don't cost an arm and a leg either, so I'm happy to abuse them somewhat, using them on their sides or flattening them into combs. I paint holding the brush quite far up the handle, as this allows for a more gestural approach and stops me becoming too fiddly or controlled. I hold pencils and watercolour sticks in the same way and more interesting marks emerge.

www.kateosborneart.com

YOU WILL NEED

- **PAPER**
  Saunders Waterford rough 425gsm watercolour paper
- **WATERCOLOUR**
  Cobalt Blue, Cerulean Blue, Green, Yellow Green, Perylene Green, Green Gold, Opera Pink, Transparent Pyrrole Orange, Translucent Yellow, Magenta and Burnt Sienna, various brands
- **BRUSHES**
  Round Chinese weasel hair brushes, various sizes; Pro Arte Series 9A Prolene Sword Liners, sizes small, medium and large
- **DANIEL SMITH WATERCOLOUR STICKS, VARIOUS COLOURS**
- **DERWENT INKTENSE CRAYONS, VARIOUS COLOURS**
- **DROPPER BOTTLE**
- **SPRAY BOTTLE**

1 START IN THE MIDDLE

With the flowers arranged in an old tin can, I began near the centre of the page with the intention of letting the painting blossom outwards. The purple geraniums were painted with a mix of Opera Pink and Cerulean Blue – the latter has a way of granulating and separating slightly that really appeals. While the paint was still wet, I added a translucent yellow for the buttercups.

2 LET COLOURS BLEED

With the other paint still wet, I painted the orange hieraciums (with Transparent Pyrrole Orange), the docks (with Burnt Sienna and Transparent Pyrrole Orange) and the foliage behind the flowers (with Green, Cerulean Blue and Yellow Green), not worrying too much about the colours bleeding together. At this stage I was using the paint very wet and didn't want too many crisp and defined edges.

3 ADD VARIETY

I dropped in more paint to deepen the tones and also small amounts of clear water from a dropper bottle into the already-painted areas to create a wider variety of tones. Adding water with the dropper bottle pushes paint away and creates the lighter areas, while also creating all those gorgeous textures, haloes, cauliflowers and deltas that are loved by contemporary watercolourists.

4 KEEP THINGS MOVING

The tin was painted using a flat brush with a mix of Cerulean Blue and Burnt Sienna. The trick here is to keep the paint moving in the centre of an area of colour, while also keeping the edges dry. When the paint goes from wet to damp, it is far easier to control the colour bleed, and so I took the opportunity to paint the leaf that defined the left-hand side of the tin.

5 LOAD UP ON PAINT

The docks on the left were just damp enough to drop in a richer mix of Burnt Sienna and Transparent Pyrrole Orange. I did this by loading my brush and touching it on the surface of the paper – no stroking or pushing around is necessary. When the paint dried, I used the sword liner brushes to draw in the flowers very impressionistically and add a bit of detail to the orange hieraciums.

6 DRAW INTO DAMP AREAS

I painted the foliage with Green Gold and Green. I also used a Green Inktense crayon and a Green Gold Daniel Smith watercolour stick to draw into both the damp and dry areas and suggest the cow parsley seed heads. Used sparingly, sticks and crayons can make a nice counterpoint to the broadness of the watercolour washes and add another dimension to your painting.

7 BUILD AND SOFTEN

Once the first stage had dried, I started to 'find' the negative shape of the geraniums and buttercups by adding deeper tones to the foliage behind. I used Green and Perylene Green for this with a little Cerulean Blue dropped in. I also use a little spray to soften the edges of one or two areas to keep the soft, impressionistic tone of the painting.

8 PICK OUT SHAPES

Within the negative shapes of the foliage, I picked out a couple of sword-shaped leaves to contrast with the mostly rounded shapes of the main section of the painting. I used the Inktense crayons to draw in more of the spiky cow parsley seed heads. >

Top tip

FOR A MORE DYNAMIC PAINTING, VARY THE SHAPES, COLOURS AND SOFTNESS OF EDGES

9 TIME YOUR DROPS

As different parts of the painting progressed from wet to just damp, I dropped in water and richer mixes of paint. It's a game of patience and attention, as timing is important and the right moment easily missed. I defined the buttercups at the bottom of the arrangement by lightly painting foliage, dropping in more water and drawing with the sword liner brush.

10 BE UNDERSTATED

I painted the centre of the geraniums with Cerulean Blue and Magenta. I lifted out a little paint from the areas that came out too strong and used Inktense crayons to draw veins on the petals. Despite this detail, the aim is to be understated – describing things too much leaves little for the viewer to do and somehow drains the painting of energy.

11 BREAK UP LARGER AREAS

The dark foliage was created with a mix of Perylene Green and Green and, while it was still wet, I dropped in some Cerulean Blue. Dropping related colours into wet areas and allowing them to mix and separate on the paper adds a liveliness that is hard to achieve any other way. I also suggested the centres of the buttercups with a red crayon.

12 DEEPEN THE TONES

I added deeper tones to the right-hand side with Perylene Green. I wanted this to be the darker side of the composition and to give a sense of the light coming from the left-hand side. The ribs of the tin can were painted with a rich mix of Cerulean Blue and Burnt Sienna, using firm strokes of the sword liner that I then sprayed a little and dropped in water.

13 FINISHING TOUCHES

The heart of the rose was painted simply with Opera Rose and a little Transparent Pyrrole Orange dropped in to liven it up. Leaves and stalks were drawn with the sword liners and more detail was added to the dock on the left to define the geranium petals in front of them. I then add some finer marks with Green Gold and Burnt Sienna watercolour sticks.

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YOUR QUESTIONS

PLEIN AIR PAINTING

AWARD-WINNING LANDSCAPE ARTIST **ADEBANJI ALADE** ANSWERS ALL YOUR OUTDOOR PAINTING QUERIES

What brushes should I take with me?
I take a lot, but I only end up using two because I don't have time to keep changing brushes when I'm responding to what I see. It's great to take a variety, but you can't go wrong with a round, pointed sable brush for the details – either a size 2 or 4 – and a long, flat mongoose brush for the rest.

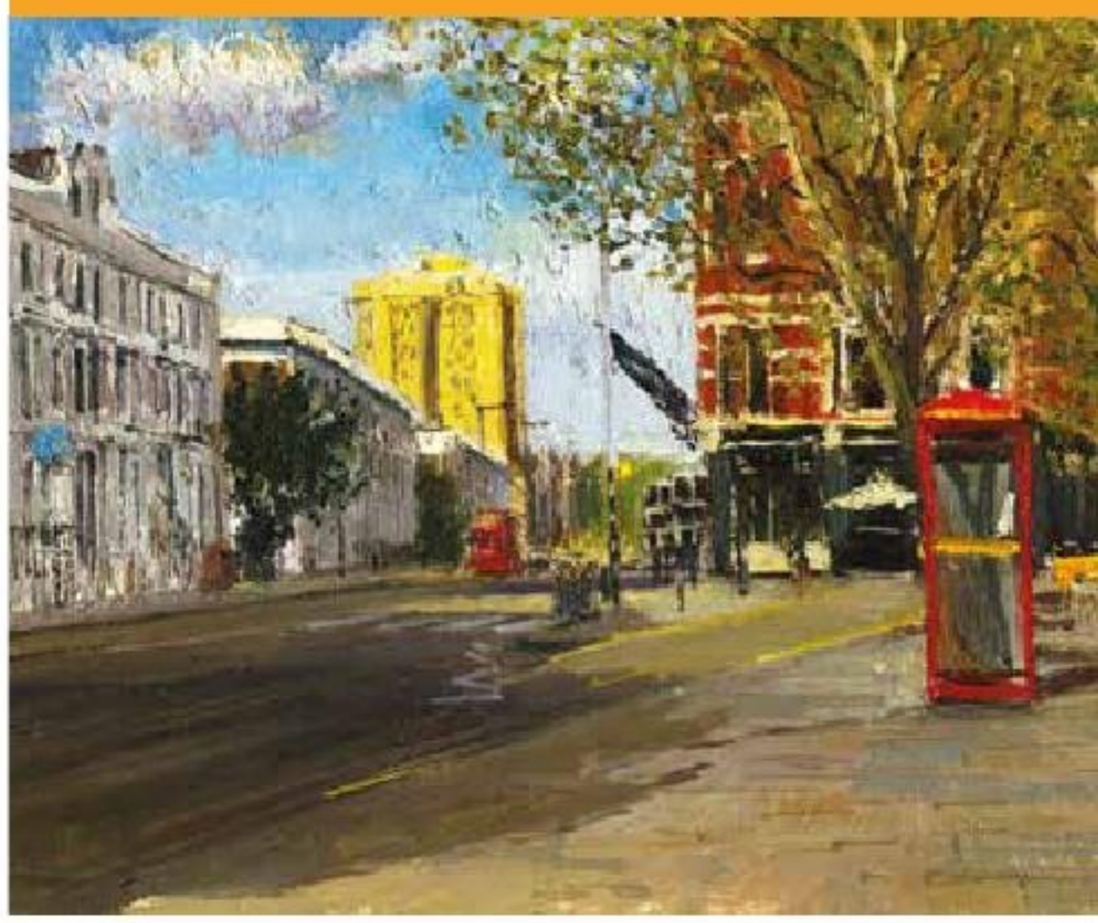
Should I pre-mix my colours before heading outdoors?
For me, mixing takes place on the spot rather than beforehand because I don't know what I'll need until I get there. I have a set of 12 colours that I always squeeze out onto the same place on my palette, which means I can paint more instinctively. When it comes to painting trees, I'll use a lot of Yellow Ochre and Viridian Green, and I always like a cool Cobalt Blue too. I tend to use these three colours the most.

The light keeps changing. Should I change what I paint throughout the day?
Trying to capture a fleeting moment of light requires you to work quickly. Often I'll just want to record a place and its environment without worrying whether the light changes or not. It makes it easier to adjust your picture and you're under less pressure, which means you can enjoy the whole experience much more.

Should I take photographs while I paint?
I personally have never been against the use of technology. Tesco says, "Every little helps," and if Monet lived in the time we live today, he would likely make the best use of digital photography. Why not if it simplifies the process? However, the great thing about observing things from life is that we don't see what the camera sees. We focus on only one thing at a time and the rest of it is blurred, which is good for artists. The camera focuses on everything and artists who take photos tend to want to paint every little thing they see. That's stressful. We should choose what we want the centre of interest to be and then the rest of it can play its part to complement the composition.

I find painting outdoors overwhelming. What can I do to make it more manageable?
Try to focus on one aspect of the scene you are painting. Sometimes it's just a beautiful scene with lovely shadows that make it interesting. Most of the time, what really makes a picture work is the abstract design of the picture. If you look at it with a blurred eye view, or if you squint, the balancing of light and dark shapes shouldn't be equal. There must be some inequality so you have a nice bright spot and the rest will be dark, or a nice dark spot and the rest will be light. One area will shout, the other will whisper. I'm always looking for the overall design. The success of a painting is often not about what the components are but how the components work together as a whole.

What materials would you recommend?
A pochade box is essential. It can support your board or canvas, and it holds all your paints, brushes and mediums in one place without being too heavy so it makes life easier. The only thing you may wish to do is connect it to a tripod to support it while you work.

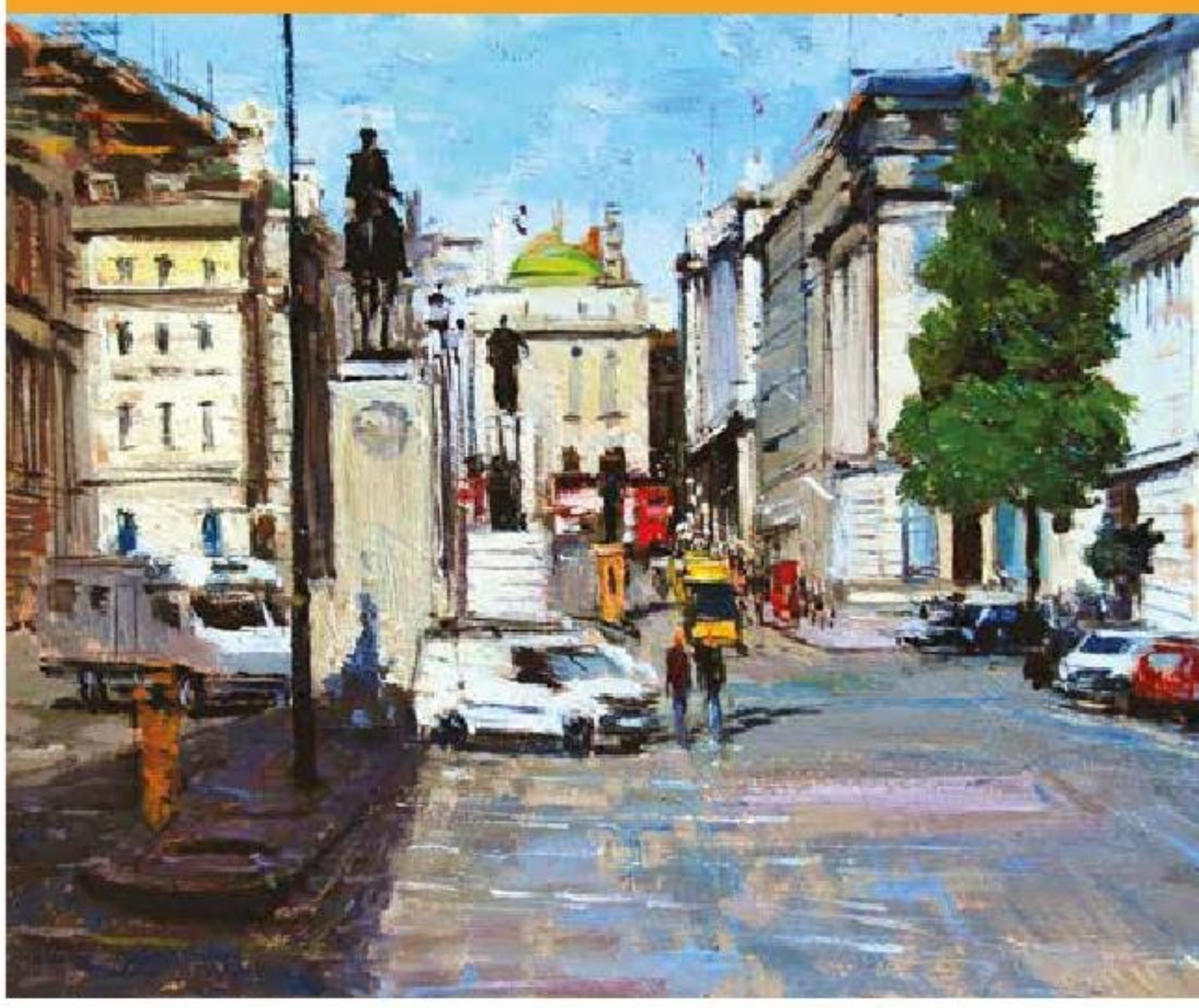


What are the ideal weather conditions for plein air painting?
If you're looking for drama, the best times to paint are early mornings or late evenings. I'm not always looking for that drama so I would say the best time is a nice grey day, so you can practice. Once you have built up your confidence on painting a grey day, you can add the drama – but don't jump straight into it. You've got to have some good drawing and painting skills to pull that off, which comes with practice. >

ABOVE *Cabot Square*, oil on board, 25x20cm
TOP RIGHT *Summer Light, Westfield Park*, oil on board, 25x20cm
ABOVE RIGHT *Summer Light, Chelsea, World's End*, oil on board, 25x20cm

Do you have any tips for painting clouds?

Don't feel as though you have to paint exactly what you see. At the end of the day, people aren't going to look at your painting and say, "That cloud didn't look like that!" However, if you can do without a cloud then do without it – they can distract the viewer from enjoying the rest of the painting.



What's the best way to paint water in river scenes and coastal landscapes?

Try to simplify the motion of the water and bear in mind the manner of your brushstrokes because they matter a lot. Always paint with the flow of the water and take time to look at how the colours and tones come together. When I'm painting water, I spend three or four minutes watching the water and observing its movements. Painting water is only ever easy when it's calm and perfectly reflective. Otherwise, you have to squint to see the shapes that the water is making.

How do you deal with spectators when you're painting outdoors?

I'm an extrovert and so I love hearing what others have to say. I'd be worried that there's something wrong with my painting if people didn't come to talk to me!

If you'd rather be left alone, you could always paint with your back to a wall so that passers-by can't glance at your work. Or try painting in the countryside where only birds and animals will disturb you.

However, my real advice would be to try and embrace people's interest in your work. If you can make others feel the way that you feel when you're painting, then that is the best way to get people interested in what you're making and perhaps even buying your artwork. I was painting a stairway in Bath and a man stopped to say he never knew a flight of steps could look beautiful. It's always lovely to get that kind of feedback.

How do you turn your smaller plein air paintings into larger studio works?

Unlike some artists, I seldom take smaller plein air paintings and blow them up in the studio. I prefer to work on a larger scale outdoors but I do so over two or three sittings, returning to the same location at the same time of day.

How do you transport your wet artworks?

Abbeys Easels in Wiltshire make these great 'Wet Board Carriers' – wooden boxes with dividers that you can slot MDF boards into without them touching each other.

However, if I'm working on canvas, I'll take two canvases of the same size out with me on the day – one that I intend to paint on and one that I don't. Once I've finished my painting, I'll place small pieces of cork around the edge then lay the blank canvas on top of it so the surface still has space to breathe and carry them under one arm. I just take my gear in a wheel-along suitcase, which works for me, as I don't have a car.

Adebanji will be demonstrating at *A Brush with the Broads*, which runs at venues across Norfolk from 24-28 September. For more details, visit www.abrushwiththebroads.co.uk

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT *Fresh Morning Light, Newtown, Wales*, oil on board, 25x20cm; *Winter Light, Royal Hospital Road*, oil on canvas, 45x35cm; *Pall Mall*, oil on board, 25x20cm

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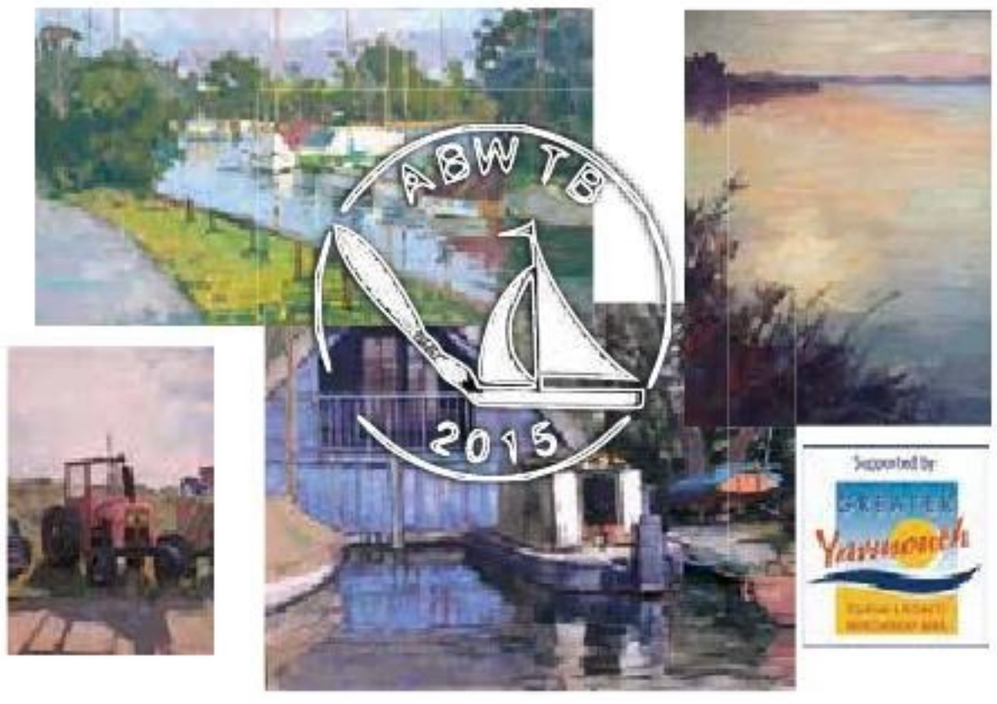

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THE BIGGER PICTURE

1. CLEVER CONTRASTS

WHAT MAKES A PAINTING WORK? **RAY BALKWILL'S** NEW SERIES WILL TAKE ON A DIFFERENT TOPIC EACH MONTH, STARTING WITH HOW CONTRASTS CAN BE USED TO CREATE EYE-CATCHING DESIGNS

Drawing the eye with contrasts is essential to a good painting. Without contrast your eye passes quickly over an expanse of similarity in a painting and soon leaves it. But when it finds contrast, the eye is excited and the interest is held.

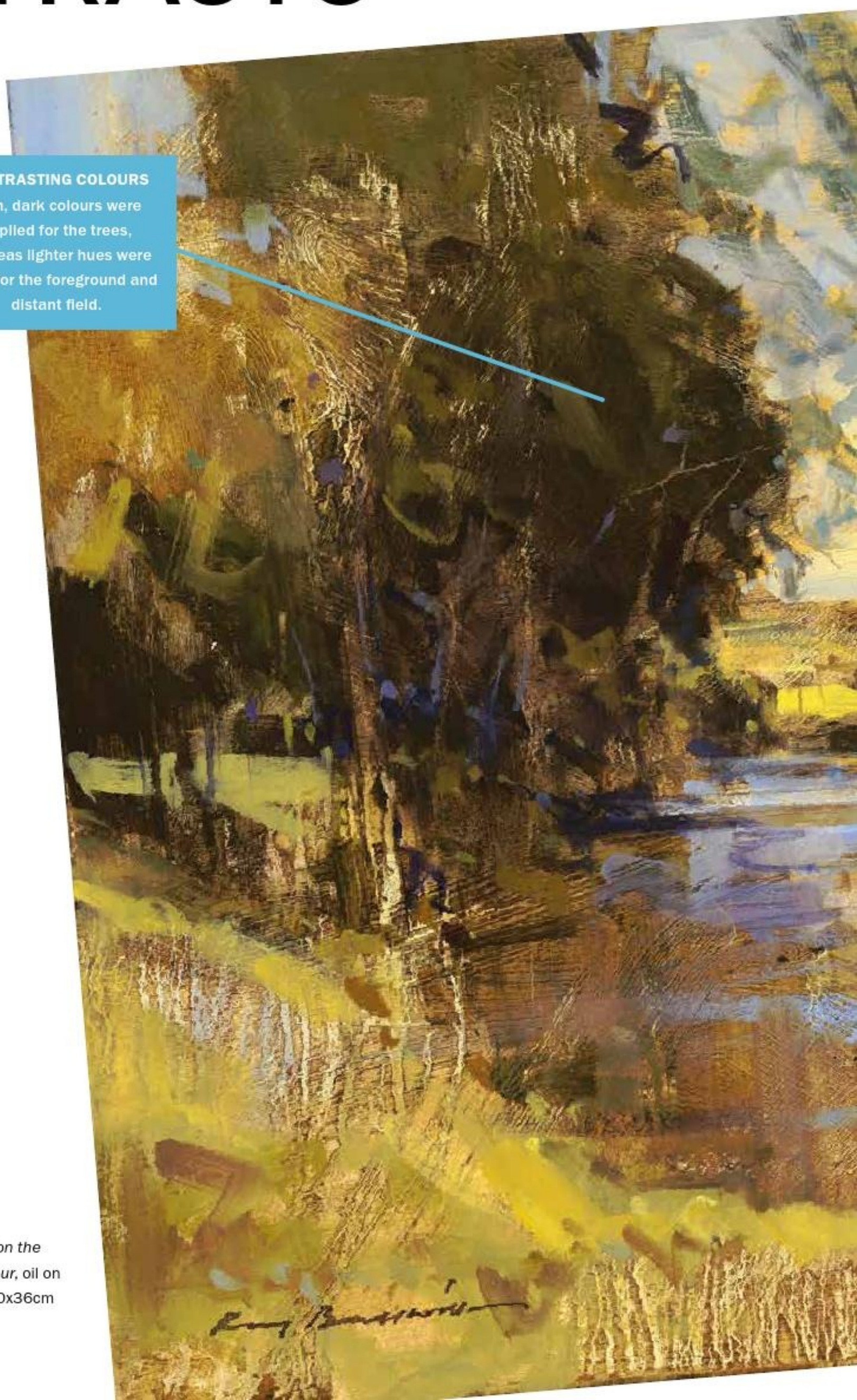
Contrasts can be achieved in a number of different ways, for instance, by using warm and cold colours, or by using complementary colour. Using thick and thin line, or rough and smooth texture can also achieve this. This article will concentrate on tone: the foundation of a painting.

INSPIRED BY CONSTABLE

The River Stour in Dedham Vale is 'Constable Country', the place where the artist John Constable called home. He believed an artist should forget about formulas and trust his own vision in finding truth in nature. To find that 'truth', he made oil sketches outdoors, which he then worked up into larger canvases in the studio.

I worked up *Boating on the River Stour* in a similar way. The value of a quick sketch is that it gives you the chance to record only the essential elements of a subject, such as mood, feeling or light conditions. If we use a photographic reference instead, the temptation is to include every last detail. Likewise, I prefer to use black felt-tip pen and charcoal when sketching on location – a monochrome reference encourages me to interpret the colours more when I begin work on my finished painting.

CONTRASTING COLOURS
Rich, dark colours were applied for the trees, whereas lighter hues were used for the foreground and distant field.



Boating on the River Stour, oil on board, 30x36cm

Top tip

ARE YOU STRUGGLING TO IDENTIFY TONES? TAKE A PHOTO OF YOUR SUBJECT AND EITHER PHOTOCOPY IT OR CONVERT IT TO BLACK AND WHITE ON YOUR COMPUTER OR TABLET.

DESIGNING WITH SHAPES

A thumbnail study can help when planning your tones – after all, it is much better to make your big mistakes in little ways that don't count.

Begin by breaking the scene down into large, simplified masses of similar tones. Divide the picture into no more than four values – white, light grey, dark grey and black. Assign one of the four values to each large mass of your painting. If you're struggling to identify the masses of tone, try squinting when you look at the scene, it allows you to eliminate detail. Try to think of things like trees or boats not as the actual objects but rather as just shapes in abstract terms.

Strive for variety in the size and complexity of your shapes. Consider the proportion of light to dark, and let one dominate over the other. Also think about counterchange – the placing of light shapes against dark ones, and vice versa. Counterchange brings movement and rhythm to a painting.

CHOOSE YOUR CONTRAST

It is important to have a range of contrast in your paintings to truly show off the range of colours. This painting was done on a primed MDF support using a limited range of colours. I prefer to work on a mid-tone ground and find a warm umber useful for landscapes. I state the darkest dark and lightest light early on, which gives me a tonal scale to work within.

An artist can also employ contrast as a tool to direct the viewer's attention to a point of interest within the painting. In the example on the left, I made the figures in the rowing boat lighter than they appeared in my original sketch, which drew the eye to them. Giving one of the figures a red shirt would also have been another way to achieve this.

www.raybalkwill.co.uk

CONTRASTING THICKNESS
Applying oil paint thinned with turps over the under-painting allowed me to suggest the water and reflections.

SMALL SCALE BIG STROKES

CHOOSING A TINY SUPPORT CAN LIBERATE YOUR ART. **KIM SCOULLER** SHOWS HOW TO CREATE PAINTERLY WORKS ON A VERY MODEST SCALE

There are many benefits to working on a small scale. It can be much less intimidating than a large blank canvas and more time effective. I often start with small paintings to get my eye in before progressing to a larger canvas or board. Small paintings tend to be considered as studies or miniatures but I think they have as much value as larger works. There is a distance created by working on a large scale, both physically and psychologically, whereas on a smaller scale you can create more intimacy.

MATERIALS

I've always switched between smaller and larger paintings. The smallest painting I ever made was just 8cm wide whereas the largest measured 1.2m^2. For the most part, I prefer work on boards that are around 25-30cm.

I prefer using boards for smaller paintings, as I like the way the rigidity effects how the brushmarks are accepted onto the ground. Jabs, ticks and sweeps all dance on the surface while washes remain quietly in the background.

I like using unusually shaped boards as it opens up surprising possibilities for compositional ideas. For this reason working on board is ideal, as I can cut the prepared board to suit my subject. Less orthodox shapes like an extended rectangle or a square can encourage interesting ideas and suggest unusual crops of a subject. I make most of my breakthroughs when I'm experimenting with paint on a small scale.

I prime my small MDF boards with two coats of Pip Seymour's Professional Acrylic Size followed by two coats of Pip Seymour's Professional Acrylic Gesso. This priming creates a nice smooth and slightly absorbent surface on which to work. On top of this I'll apply a fairly neutral ground, which will usually give a colour key for the painting that can help it develop.

I predominantly paint with Winsor & Newton's Artists' Oil Colours, as I like their consistency and range of colours. However, I've recently been experimenting with Michael Harding's Titanium White No.3 with driers. It dries almost overnight and has less oil content compared with other whites, which makes it ideal for thickening up the paint and adding juicy highlights.

SUBJECTS

I have favourite things I like to paint over and over again. I went through a period of painting orchids and cups, more recently it's been daffodils. I'm first drawn to colour and then light, and set ups with interesting combinations of subtle tones, often with a flash of pure colour somewhere in the mix. The lighting is usually dramatic; strongly side lit creating contrast and brilliant shadows. I love the colours found in shadows, they are often the part that holds the painting together.

Sometimes 'found' compositions work best, while other times I can spend hours arranging a still life. I remind myself that you have to think slow to act fast, so taking time to make the right choices at the beginning can save time later on.

A still life set up usually begins with my being drawn to a single object. I will then build the composition around it, paying attention to complementary colours and contrasts in tone that might enhance the appearance. I prefer painting flowers and figures individually – simple and direct images, without complicated backgrounds.

When it comes to breaking down and simplifying the subject, my approach is pretty intuitive. I start the painting by working directly onto the prepared board, moving marks around and playing with the composition until I'm happy with it. Whatever the subject, I try to keep in mind my initial motivation at all times – be it the interaction of light interaction, the particular colour relationships or the mood, for example – to focus my attentions through to the finish.

ECONOMY

The secret to making a small painting is to be economical. With such a small area to fill, every mark you make really counts. That's not to say the paint can't be altered once it has been applied, but rather >

ABOVE *Self-Portrait*, oil on panel, 26.5x21.5cm
OPPOSITE PAGE *Swedish Rose*, oil on panel, 31x15cm

Top tip

SET YOURSELF A TIME LIMIT. IT WILL AVOID YOU BECOMING TOO FUSSY OR DETAILED

that every mark will be scrutinised when people are viewing it at a closer range.

I begin by laying down colour in broad strokes, blocking in the shapes with flat hog hair brushes. I tend to keep the paint consistency a little thinner, by adding a paint medium that is one part linseed oil and two parts turpentine. I'm looking for the most saturated version of the colours of the main shapes, which I will modify by lightening or darkening as I modulate the tones. The reason for keeping it broad and blocky at the initial stages is that this allows you to simplify the shapes and, as it progresses, areas are revised and become increasingly more defined.

As the painting develops, it is a case of balancing the various elements. Varying the marks and thickness of paint will help enliven the work. My marks are painterly and gestural, relating to the surface and shape of the form with directional marks that lead the viewer's eye around the composition. I like to keep thicker paint neat and avoid adding any medium. If the tube paint is too oily, I will squeeze it onto a paper towel first to absorb some of this before I add it to my palette.

TOOLS

The tools are very important. I like having a variety of brush shapes and sizes. I mostly use filberts, flats and a few rounds ranging from size 2 to 12. Medium-sized brushmarks can seem gigantic on a small board, which can be exciting. I try to stick to the rule of working from the biggest brushes to the smallest ones (or 'broom to needle') – that way the paint won't become too fussy. You don't want to lose all the lovely painterly marks from the initial stages.

Enforcing a time restriction can help produce a very focused reaction to the subject. Working quickly means mixing quickly so a limited palette can help enormously – for example, if I'm working from a life model, I will usually only have earth colours on my palette, like the ochres, umbers and siennas.

I enjoy playing with complementary colours as well. A complementary coloured ground can add depth and intensity to subsequent layers, for example. Likewise, a non-complementary colour can be used to add dramatic contrast, such as a yellow daffodil against a purplish-grey background.

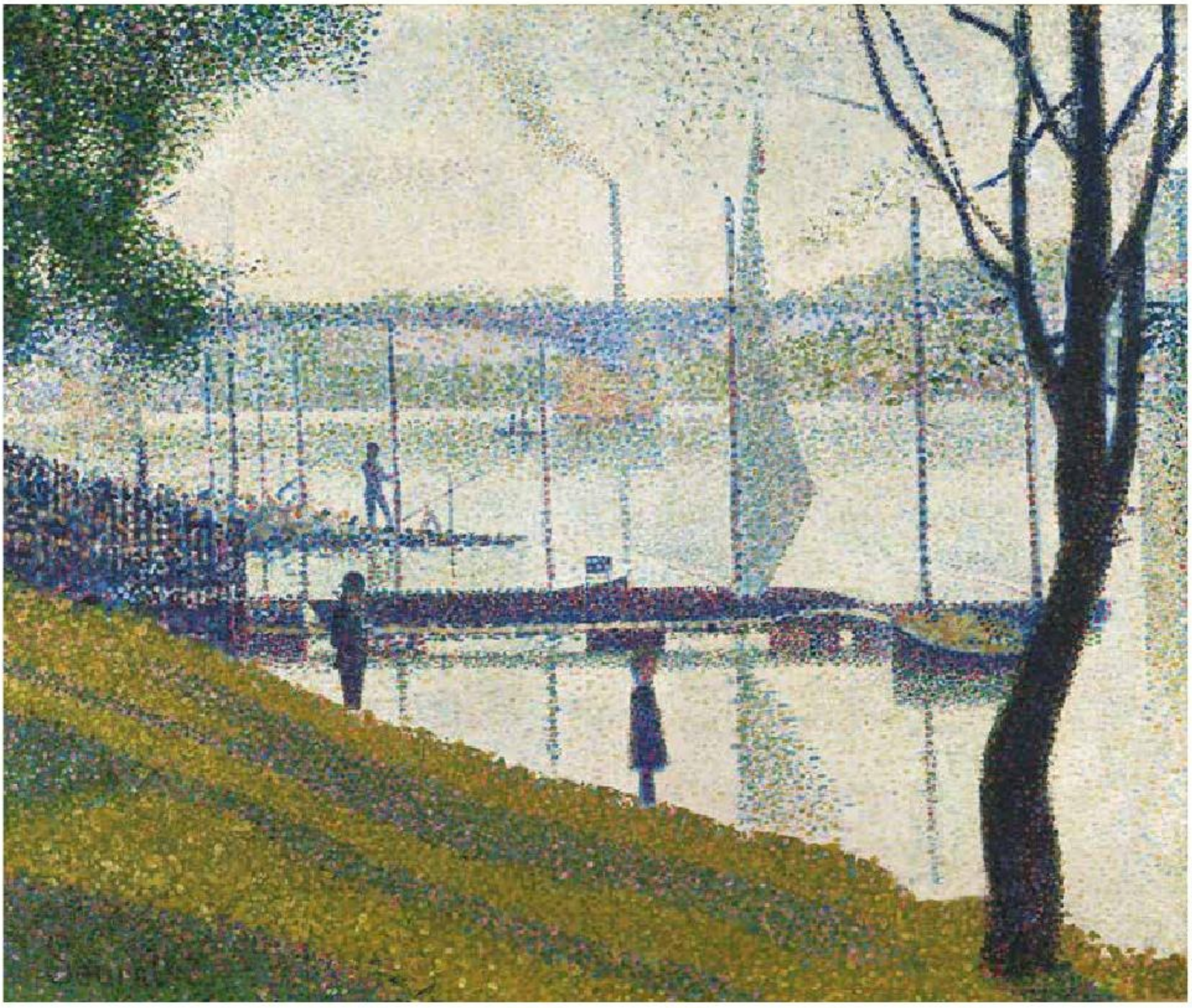
I'm always trying to find the right balance between keeping the energy and openness of my initial response, while also trying to define the subject without losing that freshness and spontaneity. Walter Sickert talks about the balance of "summary and definition", which is to do with the idea of simplifying some areas and emphasising others with detail. It's playing around with all these elements to achieve this fine balance that makes picture making such an exciting thing to do.

www.kimscouller.com

ABOVE *Boat and Cup*, oil on panel, 15x11cm
OPPOSITE PAGE *Swedish Portrait Group, Ropsten*, oil on panel, 15x12cm each

KIM'S FIVE TIPS FOR WORKING ON A SMALL SCALE

- Small works require unity. Try using a limited palette of Yellow Ochre, Titanium White, Burnt Sienna and Payne's Grey. Working on a warm toned ground will help unify the picture without having to apply paint to the whole surface.
- Try attending a life class. It lends itself well to building a momentum and working in a very focused, structured and economical way.
- Prepare a variety of surfaces to work on, in different shapes, sizes and colours. Keep them to hand so you can quickly grab the right shape of board and toned ground to meet your needs.
- Keep the darks thin and the lights thicker. This will stop the darks from deadening. Think of Rembrandt's work – making the highlights and the areas that are the focal point thicker will enliven your painting.
- Overworking a painting is easy to do. Learning to hold back comes with experience. If you find this difficult, try working on two pieces simultaneously. When you reach an impasse with one, switch to the other. Your momentum will be maintained and you will return to it with a fresh eye and insight.



COURTAULD GALLERY, LONDON

LESSONS IN COLOUR

BRITISH LEGEND **BRIDGET RILEY** IS FAMED FOR HER MINDBENDING GRAPHIC PAINTINGS, BUT A NEW EXHIBITION EXPLORES HER EARLY FIGURATIVE WORK AND THE COLOUR TIPS WE CAN LEARN FROM THEM, AS **STEVE PILL** DISCOVERS

Bridget Riley is one of the world's most distinctive and inventive painters working today. Born in Norwood in 1931, she evolved a style of painting during the 1960s that saw her place geometric blocks of varying colours and tones together in an abstract and rather graphic way. Her style was dubbed "op art", a pun on the Pop Art movement and also a recognition of the optical effects that people experienced when viewing her work.

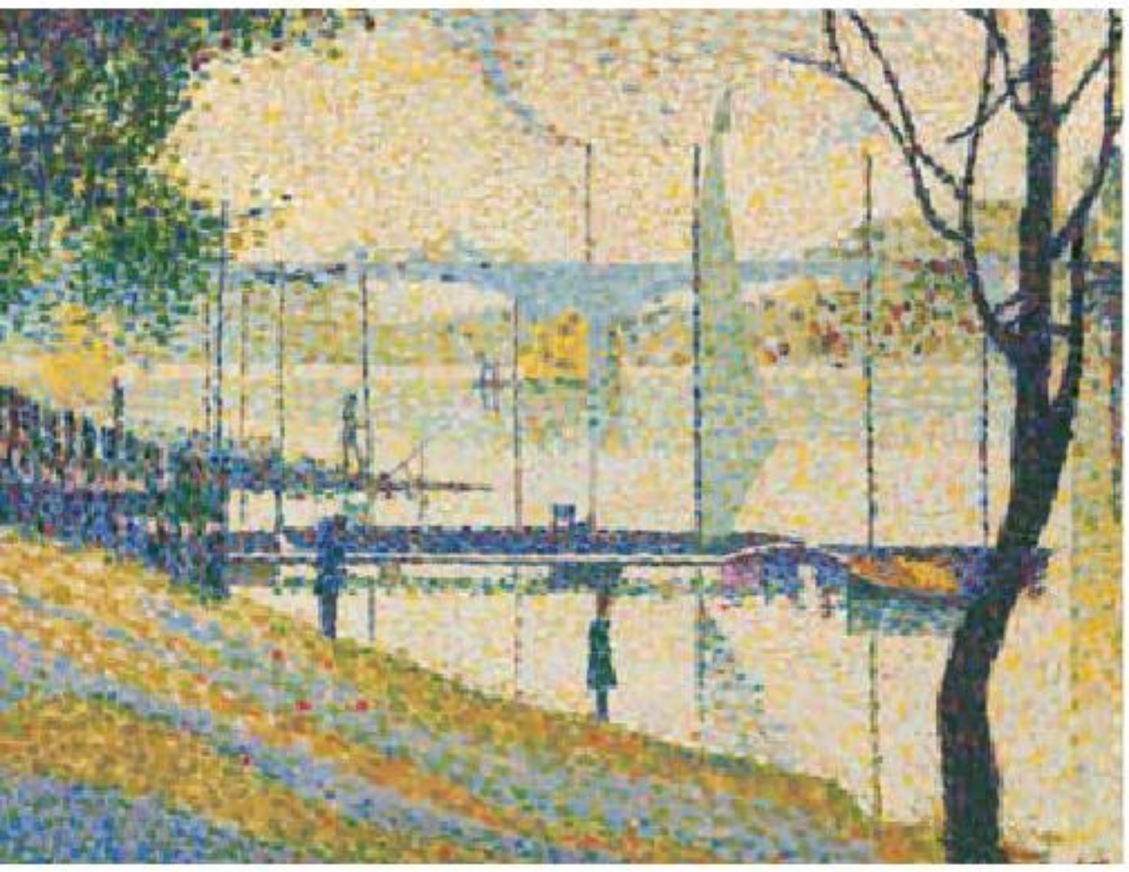
Though Riley's trademark style may seem unlike any other, she began as a figurative artist, painting in an almost Impressionistic manner and producing many tonal drawings of figures and landscapes. By looking in detail at the several giant leaps forward that the artist made during her early career, we can find much to learn about the handling and application of colour for artists of all disciplines.

ABOVE Georges Seurat, *Bridge at Courbevoie*, 1886-'87, oil on canvas, 46.4x55.3cm

STUDYING SEURAT

During her twenties, Bridget Riley was a regular in the life class, making many charcoal drawings of figures. She focused on recording tonal shifts and has since admitted that she struggled to understand colour relationships. In 1959, the young artist decided to put this right by making a copy of Georges Seurat's *Bridge at Courbevoie*.

"I copied it from a reproduction, because it is much easier to copy when one is not intimidated by the presence of a masterwork," Riley told *The Guardian* in 2012.



LEFT Bridget Riley, *Copy after Seurat's Bridge at Courbevoie*, 1959, acrylic on linen, 71.1x91.4cm
BELOW Bridget Riley, *Pink Landscape*, 1960, acrylic on linen, 101.5x101.5cm

"I learned lessons about how colours behave through interaction when placed next to each other."

Seurat was the most famous proponent of a style known as Pointillism. (He preferred to call it 'chromoluminarism' as it emphasised the focus on light and colour, but the term failed to catch on). Developed by French artists in the late 19th century, Pointillist paintings were created by placing thousands of individual dots of pure colour adjacent to one another; oil paints were favoured for this technique, thanks to their tendency not to bleed.

The idea behind Pointillism was that the viewer would blend the individual dots in the eye, creating new and vibrant ways to see colour. It was based on several scientific developments in the field of colour theory, most notably Ogden Rood's 1879 book, *Modern Chromatics*.

Seurat's *Bridge at Courbevoie* was made in 1886-'87 on the banks of the Seine in Paris. By breaking down the colours required to paint particular parts of the subject into individual dots, the artist also gives a great insight into colour mixing for less experienced artists. For example, the grassy bank includes the expected range of light blues and yellows required to create a basic green mix, whereas the dots of pink and ochre reveal how you might alter that mix to create more complex colours.

During her solo exhibition at Tate Britain in 2003, Riley gave a talk about her process in which she explained her take on the Seurat original: "I made no attempt, as you can see, to imitate his touch at all because what I wanted to do was to follow his mind – that is to say, follow his thinking."

Her dots are more substantial and don't follow the exact patterns of Seurat's brushwork. Nevertheless, Riley believed that the process of copying a painting made by an artist who is sympathetic to your own way of working was a hugely beneficial thing to do. "You see like you have never seen before," she told the Tate audience. "No amount of ever studying and looking at a painting will ever reveal as much as actually copying it if those conditions are right."

COLOUR SENSATIONS

Having better understood Seurat's Pointillist method by making a direct copy of *Bridge at Courbevoie*, Riley set about applying the technique to her own compositions.

Working in her studio, she adapted a tonal landscape study made in situ in France into a full-colour Pointillist painting. Not content with that direct response, her next step was to try and use the technique to capture the feelings experienced on location rather than describing the scene in a more figurative way.

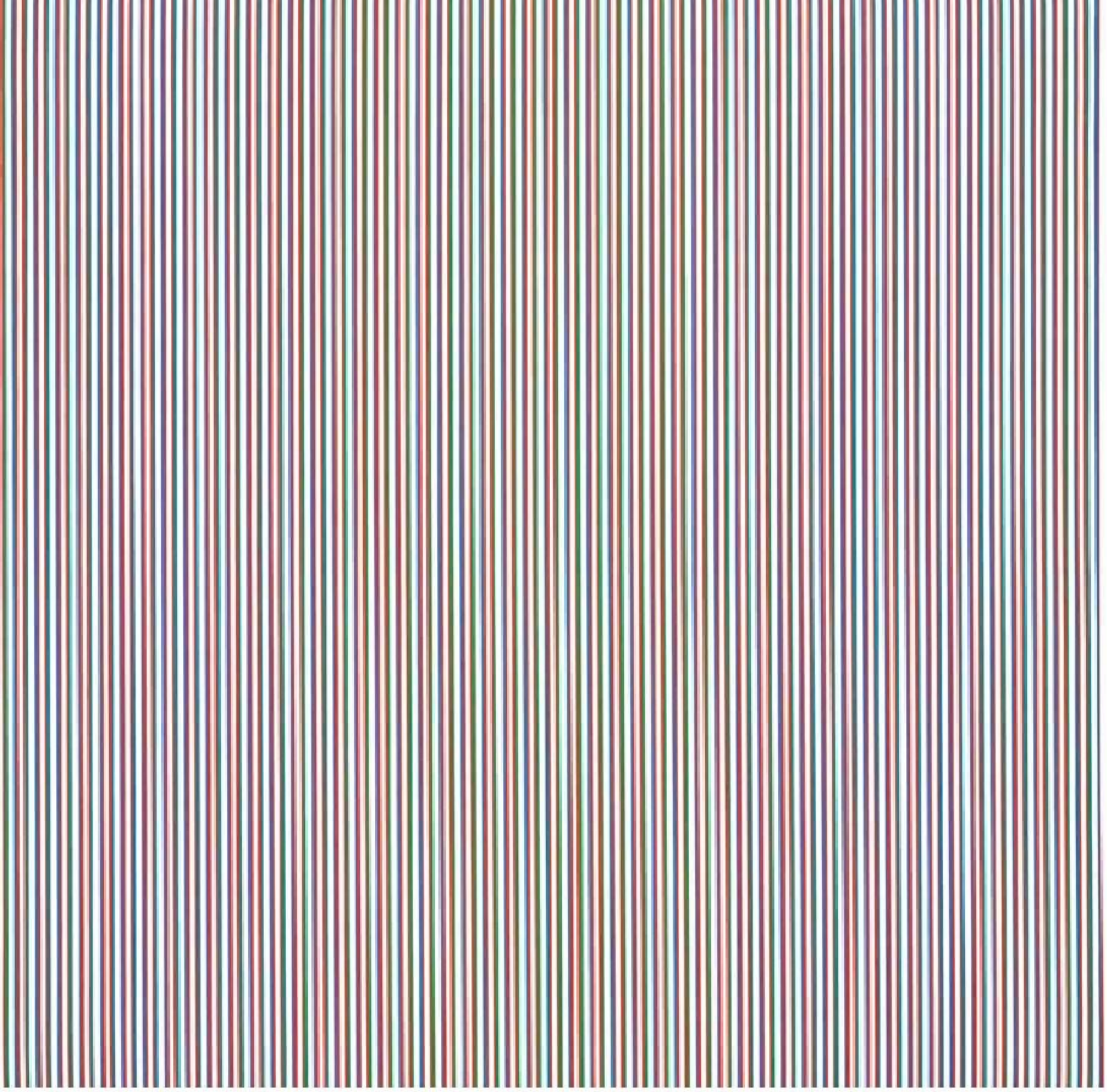
1960's *Pink Landscape* was a focused attempt to recreate the sensation of searing heat and shimmering light she had experienced on holiday in Sicily. Though you can pick out certain identifiable objects, such as a farmhouse or a few trees, the painting is primarily concerned with the undulating dots of colour, yellows that veer from pale creams to ochres and blues that range from soft pastels to richer ultramarines. "This painting was a turning point for me because it was a failure," Riley recalled at Tate Britain in 2003. "I hadn't been able to do what I wanted or hoped I could do even with a lot of preparation and with the best means I had acquired figuratively."

Pink Landscape hangs in Riley's West London home today and will go on show in a revealing new exhibition at the Courtauld in September, a rare chance for us to see a pivotal painting in her artistic development and one that precipitated something of a personal crisis at the time.

"I found myself turning the whole process upside down," she told Tate Britain. "Instead of experiencing a sensation out there in nature and trying to recreate it directly on the canvas, I tried – I wanted to try – starting from the elements themselves, starting from lines, colours and the >

"NO AMOUNT OF EVER STUDYING AND LOOKING AT A PAINTING WILL EVER REVEAL AS MUCH AS ACTUALLY COPYING IT" – BRIDGET RILEY

PRIVATE COLLECTION



LEFT Bridget Riley, *Late Morning*, 1967, acrylic on linen, 227.3x227.3cm

fact of a canvas and building something up which might or might not bring about a sensation which I might or might not be able to recognise as having previously experienced."

Just as Seurat had broken down the picture plane into individual dots of pure pigment, so Riley was ready to break up a figurative painting until we were left with nothing more than the fundamental elements.

GRAPHIC DIVISIONS

The early monochrome abstracts that Bridget Riley embarked upon in the early 1960s used repeating tonal patterns to create interesting optical effects. It wasn't until 1967, however, that she began to experiment with using pure colour in this graphic format and finally began to put all of the lessons she learned from Seurat into practice.

One of the first and most striking examples of this is *Late Morning*. The title of the work is quotidian, every bit as suggestive of a very specific time of day and quality of light as one of Monet's haystacks studies.

Rather than showing us any of the familiar elements associated with an 11am scene – a brunch table, a lazy sunshine, a long shadow – Riley instead presents us with a series of horizontal stripes of solid colour. Each was carefully arranged according to their temperature and

A PALE YELLOW LIGHT RADIATES FROM RILEY'S *LATE MORNING*... THIS IS IMPRESSIONISM AT ITS MOST BASE LEVEL

applied with polyvinyl acetate paint to create a flat, uniform sheen. The artist was particularly interested in the visual effects that were created when warm and cool variations of different colours were used on a white background.

Step back from *Late Morning* and the particular arrangement of colours interact to suggest a pale yellow light radiating from the canvas. This is Impressionism at its most base level and yet in a neat twist, and perhaps a subliminal debt to Seurat, the vertical stripes also echo the chimney, ship masts and trees of *The Bridge at Courbevoie*.

By the late 1960s, with paintings such as *Late Morning*, the artist was already tantalising close to achieving her aim of painting a sensation. The rest of her career has been a restless exploration of many of the avenues that have lead off from this first great leap forward, producing a body of work from which artists of any genre can all learn so much.

***Bridget Riley: Learning from Seurat* runs from 17 September to 17 January 2016 at the Courtauld Gallery, London WC2. www.courtauld.ac.uk**

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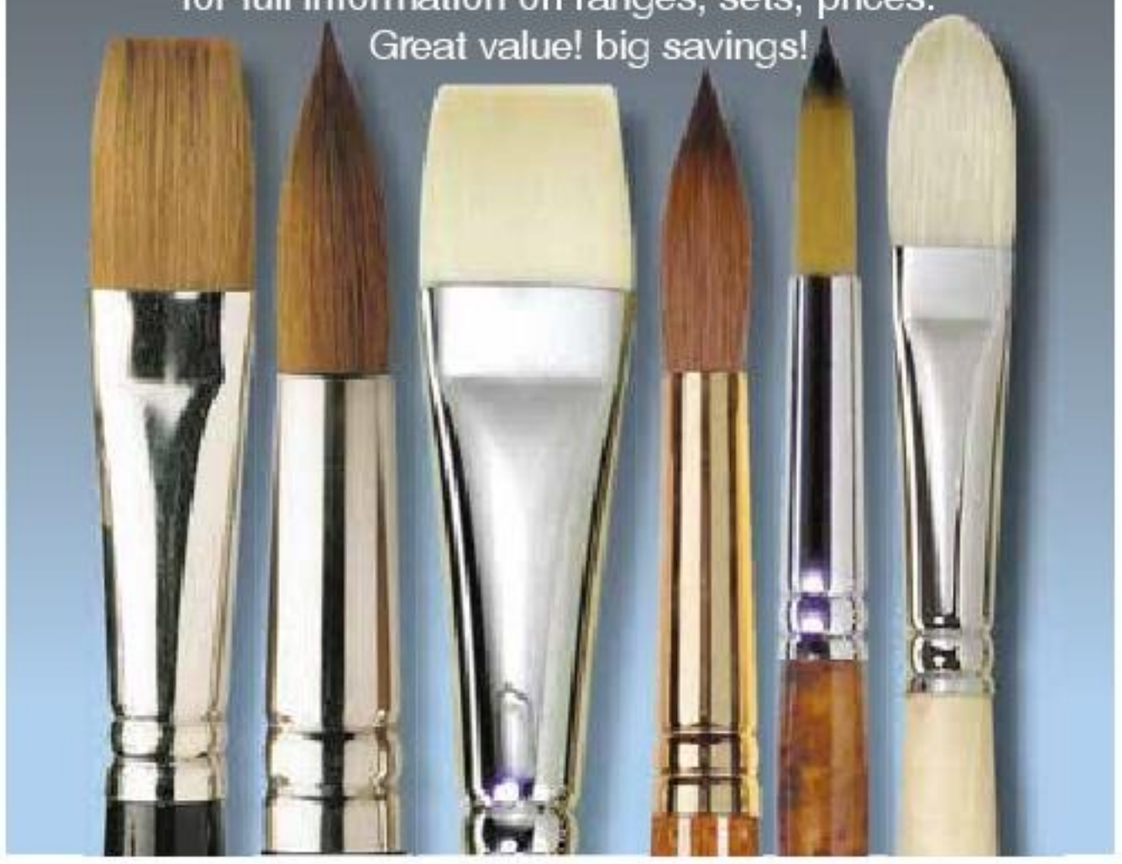

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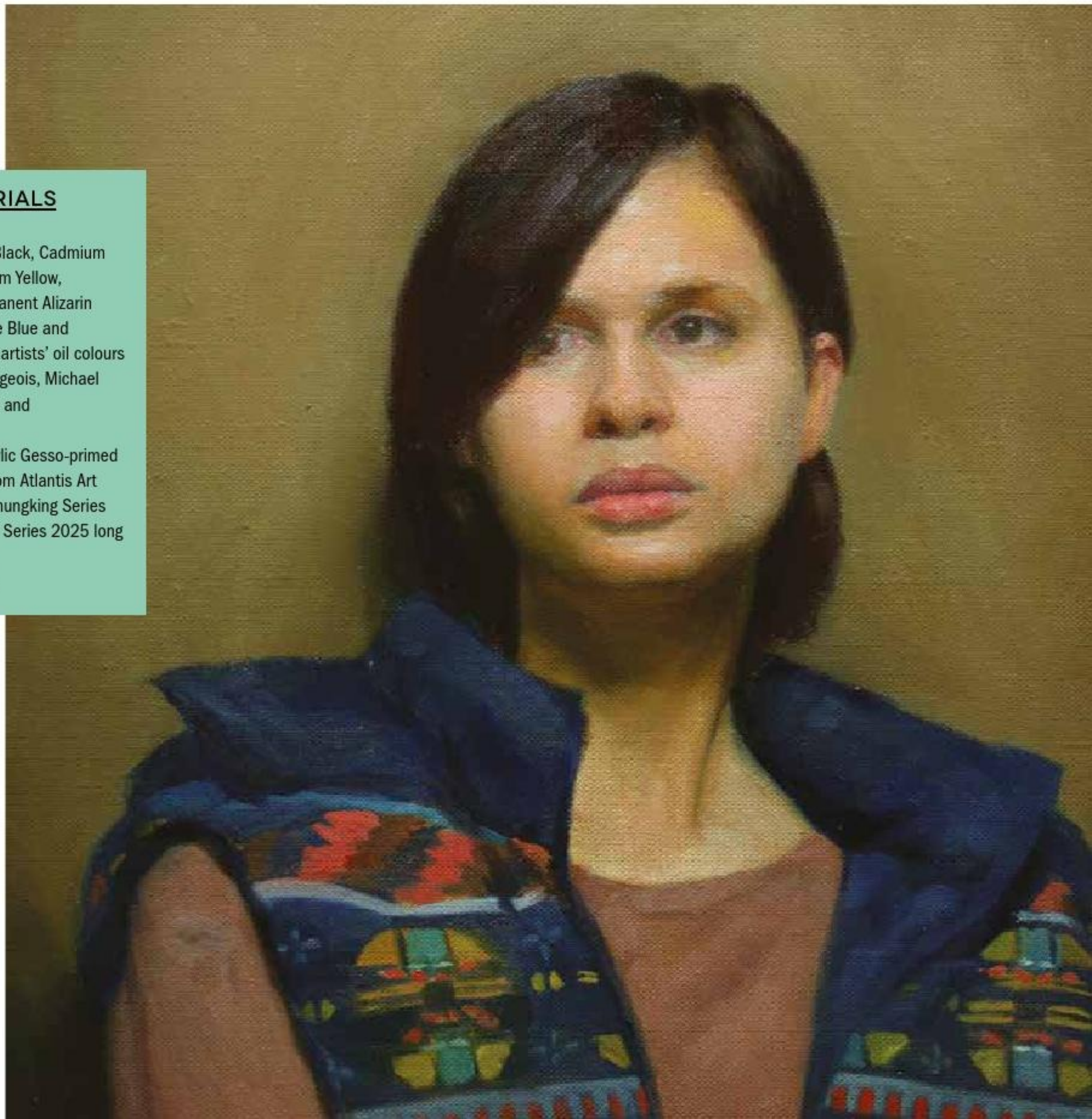
DEMONSTRATION

STUDIO PORTRAITS

TOM GREENWOOD OF LONDON ATELIER OF REPRESENTATIONAL ART SHOWS HOW TO BUILD A LIKENESS IN THE STYLE OF COVER STAR, JOHN SINGER SARGENT

For this demonstration, I wanted to show you how to paint very directly, using a method that was first taught formally by Carolus-Duran (to students including John Singer Sargent) around 1870 and was used by *fin de siècle* painters such as Joaquín Sorolla and Anders Zorn. However, before it was taught formally, painters like Frans Hals and Diego Velázquez used this approach some 200 years earlier. The approach involves blocking in the form in broad aggregated passages, gradually breaking down each larger shape into smaller sub-shapes to help refine them.

While Carolus-Duran allowed his students to spend the first session finding the outline in charcoal or thin paint, I find that the sooner I start painting the better. More recently I have dispensed with even the most basic pre-drawing, something that Sargent also did in his later years. What I love about this approach is that there is nothing to stop you painting what you see immediately because you are using the correct colours and values right from the start. That freedom not only makes it the most fun way to paint, but also makes judging proportions easier, too.

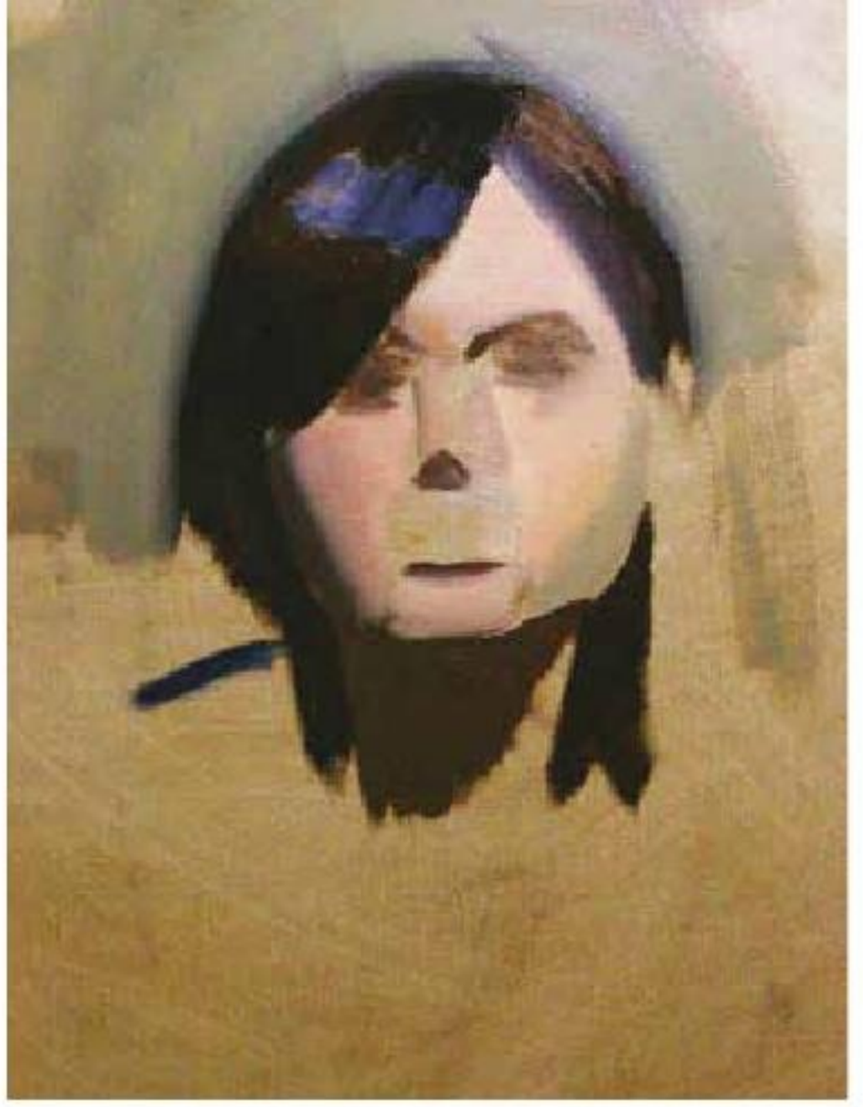


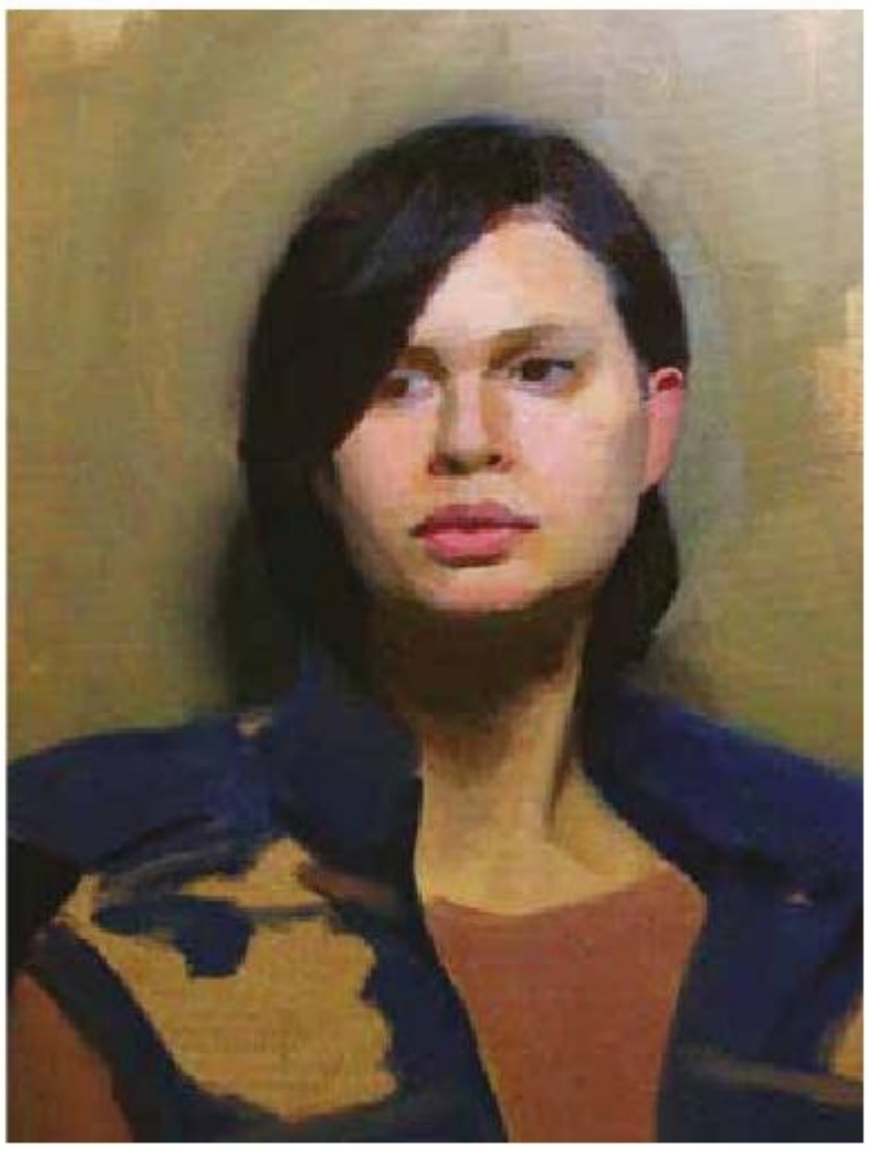
TOM'S MATERIALS

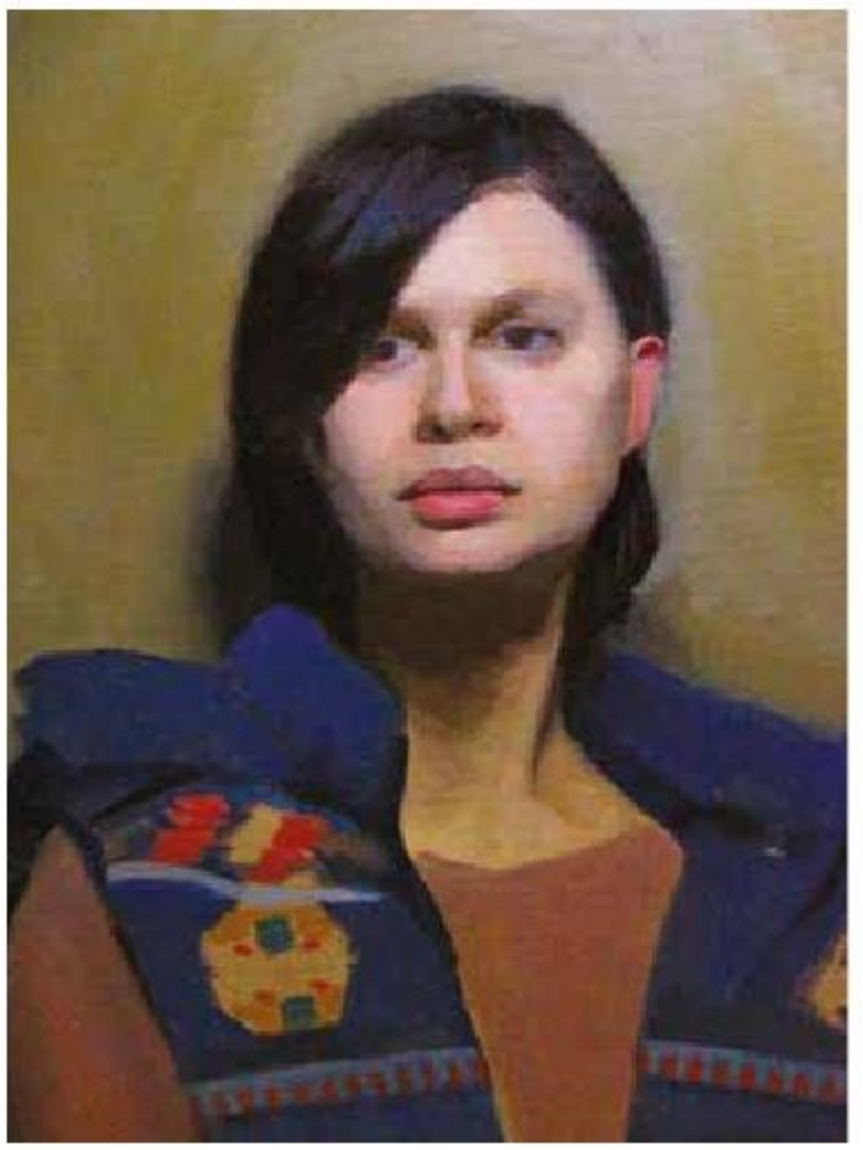
- Lead White, Ivory Black, Cadmium Yellow Light, Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Red, Permanent Alizarin Crimson, Ultramarine Blue and Manganese Blue, all artists' oil colours from LeFranc & Bourgeois, Michael Harding, Old Holland and Winsor & Newton
- Medium Grain Acrylic Gesso-primed Linen 109 canvas from Atlantis Art
- Rosemary & Co. Chungking Series 2045 long filberts or Series 2025 long flats, sizes 0 to 14
- Oleoresin medium

IMPRIMATURA

Imprimatura is a thin stain of colour applied to the ground before painting. Popular among Renaissance artists, it is often used to reduce the absorbency of the ground. For this portrait, I used Winsor & Newton's Griffin Alkyd fast-drying Burnt Umber oil colour mixed with a little Retouching Varnish from C Roberson & Co., which reduces the absorbency of acrylic gesso-primer on the canvas. If you are working on a ready-primed canvas then using turpentine or Sansodor for the imprimatura medium will be fine.





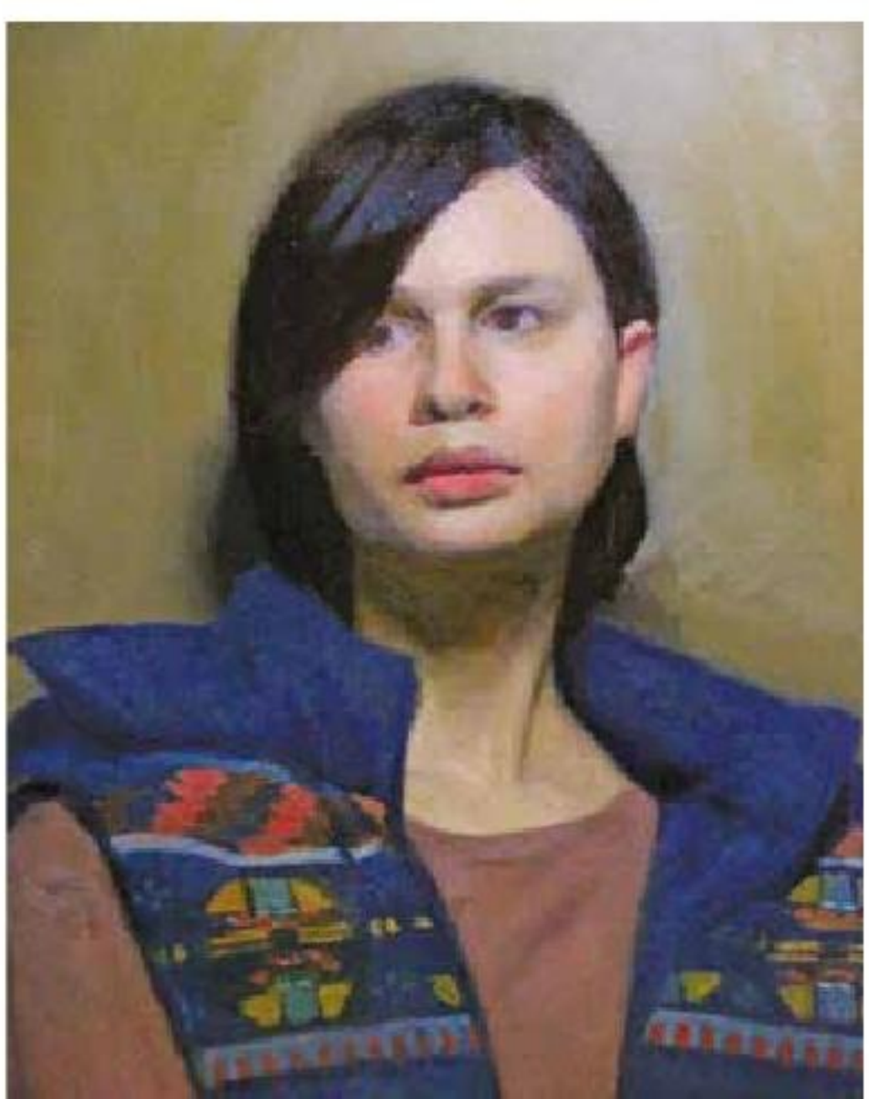


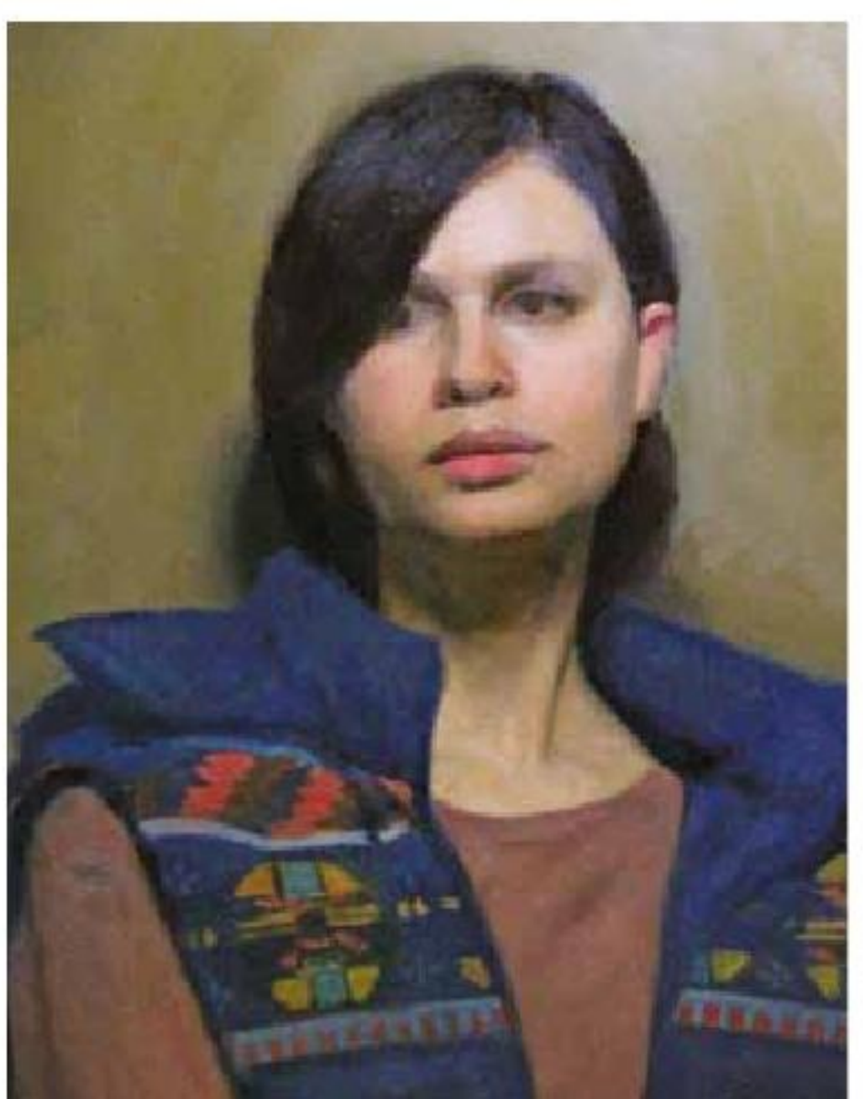
1 Try to avoid any preparatory drawing or underpainting and aim instead to create a visual impression directly on the canvas. In order to do this, the first thing to establish is the lightest and darkest area – in this case, the light forehead and dark hair. Having this 'key' of tonal values enables you to better judge the correct values elsewhere right from the start.

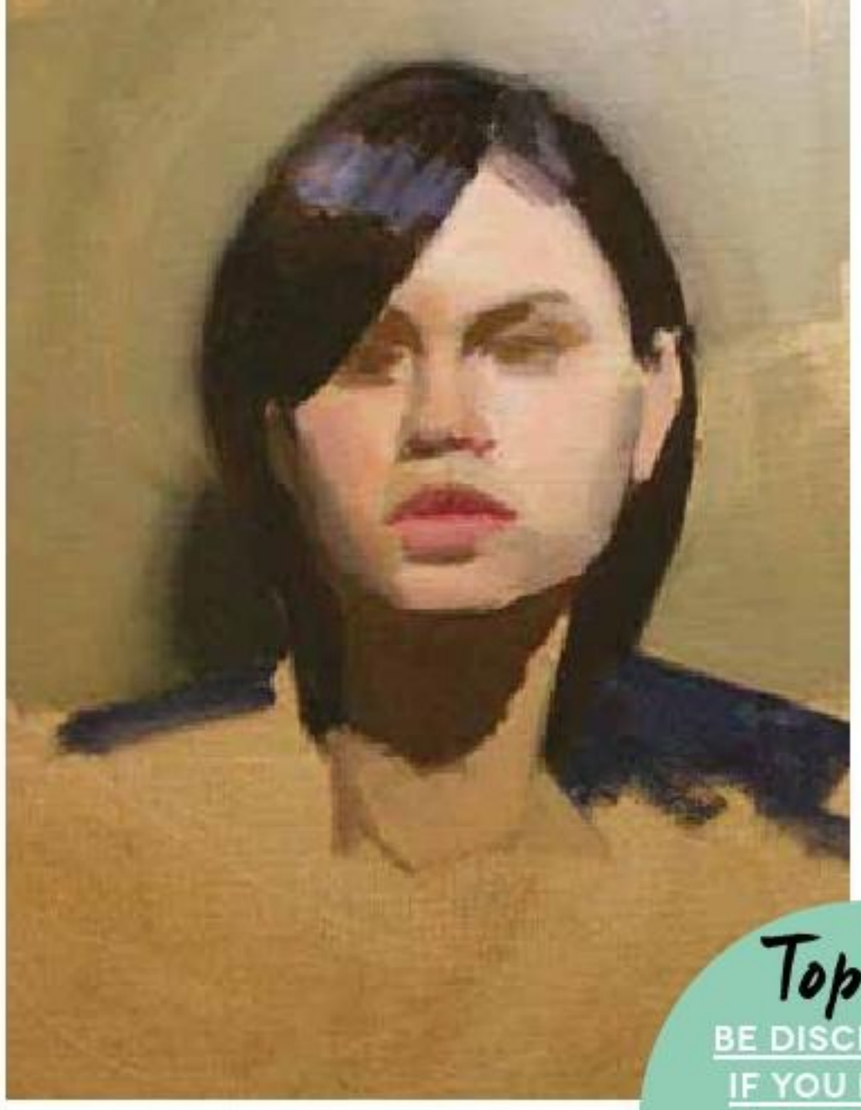
2 Use the lightest and darkest values to judge the values of the rest of the picture. Don't worry about matching every painted value exactly to every real value observed in the sitter – instead, simply aim to gauge the painted values relative to one another so that your portrait is a coherent analogy of what you see.

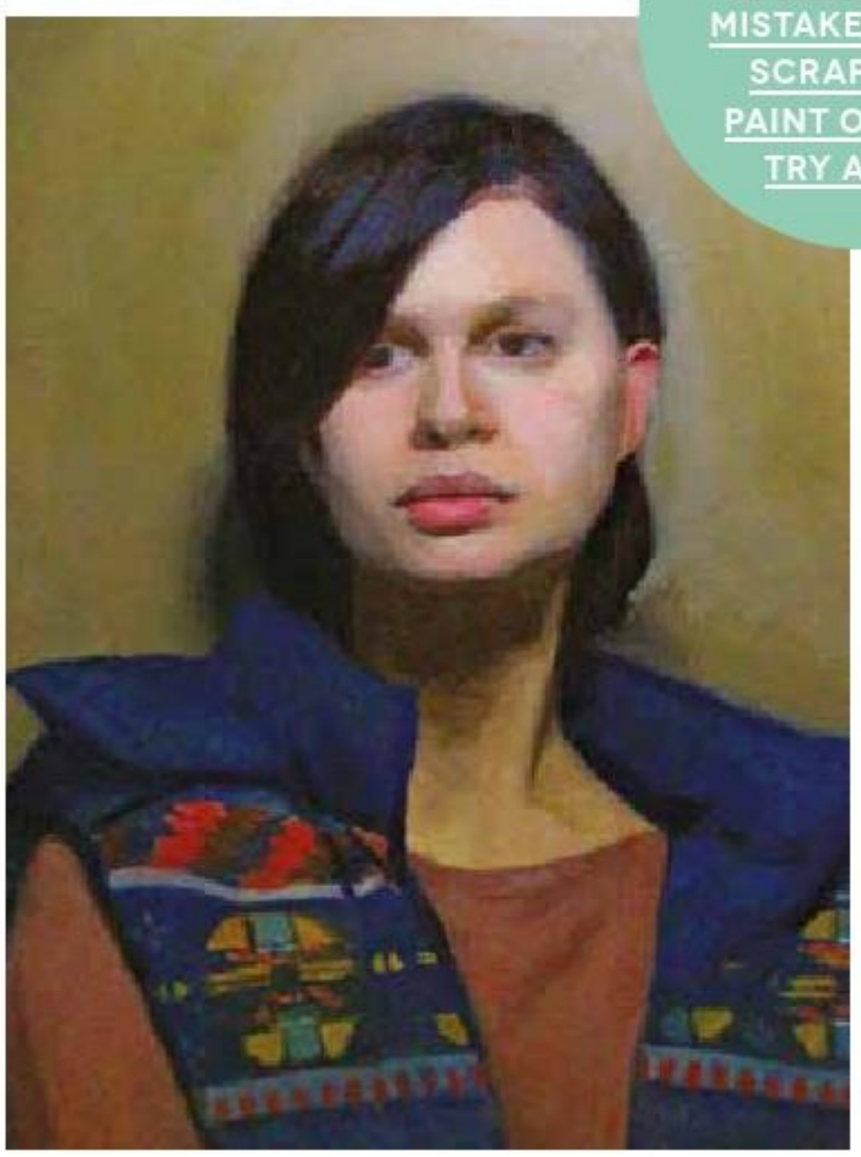
To help break down the proportions of the face, place rough markers to indicate the position of the eye sockets, the shadow under the nose and the shadow under the mouth.

3 Block-in the whole face in broad, simple shapes. Spend time on this until a rough likeness of your sitter is established. Accurate features are not required for a likeness; the shape of the face is far more important. Try to keep the edges of the paint soft, however. If you are left with some sharp edges at the end of the session, simply scrape them flat with a palette knife or blend them with a clean cloth or your finger.



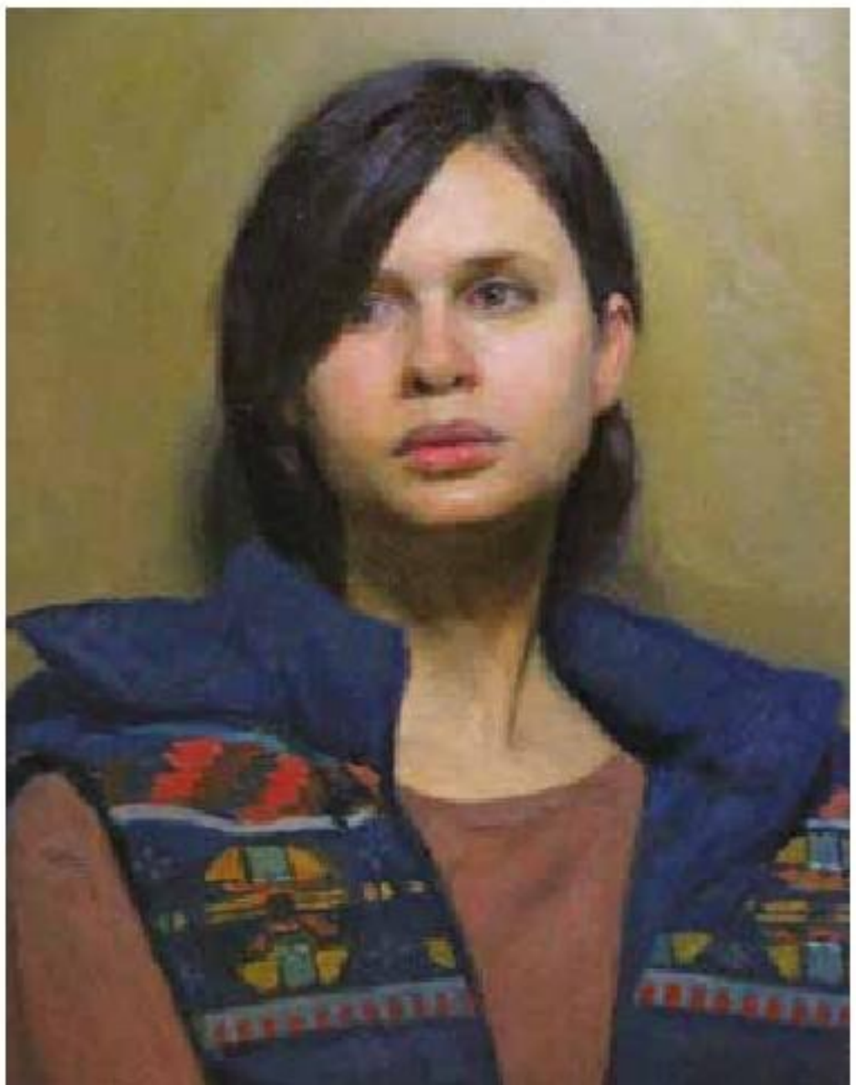






Top tip

BE DISCIPLINED. IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, SIMPLY SCRAPE THE PAINT OFF AND TRY AGAIN



4 Increase the accuracy of the proportions of the face by adding more detail. One benefit of having broadly established the colour and values in the first stage is that you can start to shape the forehead and cheeks with more confidence that the values are correct. At this point, it is important to start looking for unity of value across the face – for example, the area where her left cheek meets her chin. Finding unity in these values will have the effect of 'rendering' the surface of the skin, without the need to smooth or blend the paint.

5 Having focused mainly on the face up to this point, it is time to bring the rest of the painting up to speed. When painting clothes, it's important to keep in the mind that the patterns, textures and local colours of the material are all secondary to the form. Stay focused on the tonal values that describe the light falling across the clothes, rather than those secondary details.

6 To keep the material for the jacket's collar looking smooth and the jumper material slightly fussy, keep the edges of the shadow and half-tone shapes in the collar sharper while keeping those in the jumper softer. When painting portraits, it is important to remember that clothes are merely compositional tools. Arrange them to balance the gesture: put in details that add to the whole and omit those that do not.

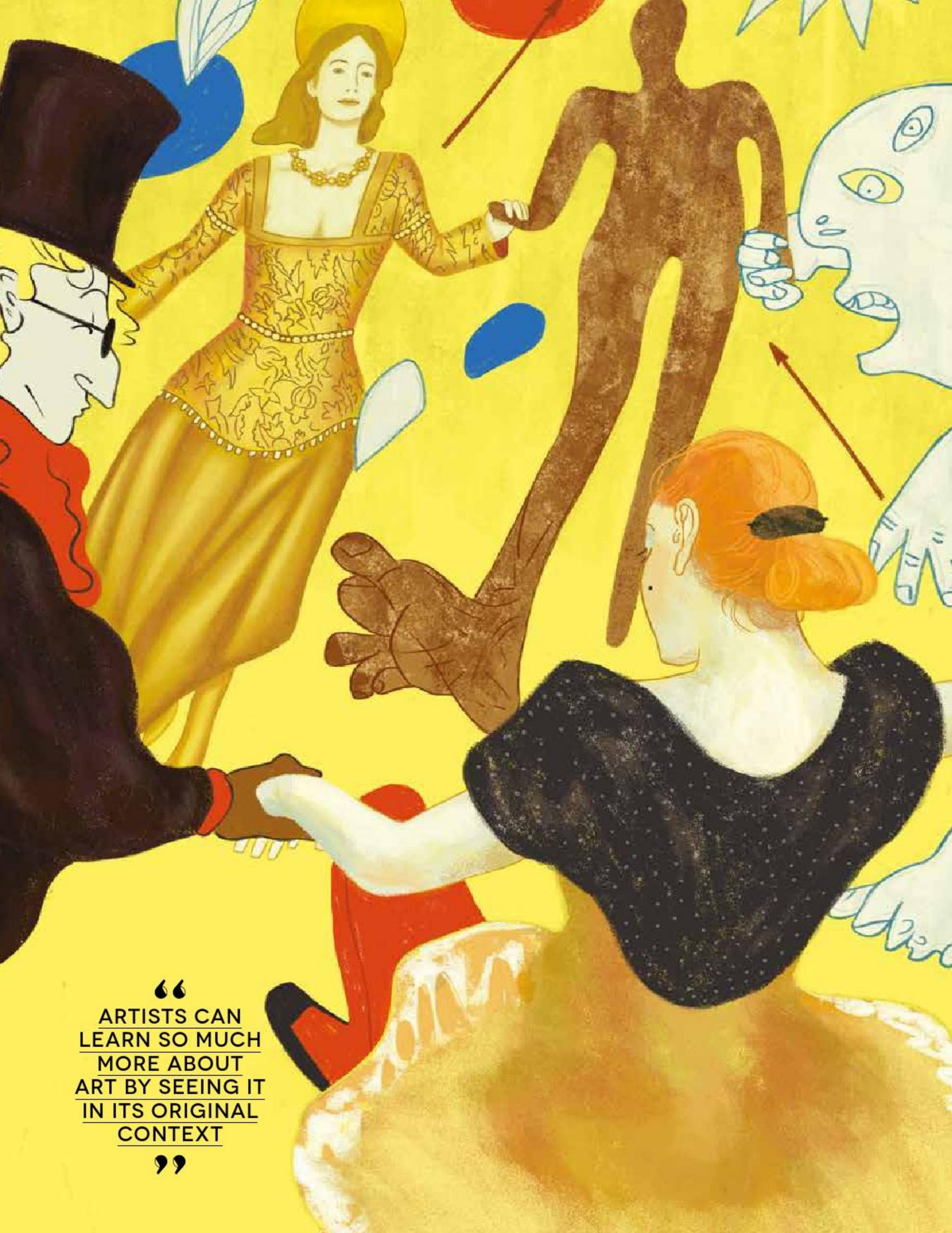
7 Even at this later stage of the painting, it is never too late to make substantial changes. Paintings often don't turn out quite right because of a reluctance to make the necessary big changes late on. In this case, I moved the sitter's mouth to the right and made almost all of her skin (apart from the rosy cheeks) yellower.

8 Having repositioned the mouth, I felt that the structure was accurate enough for me to start refining smaller shapes and transitions. I softened a lot of the brushwork along the jawline, around the mouth and in the hair. Remember, the paint does not need to be smoothly blended in order for the transition to be soft; you can use broken edges, translucent layers, 'bridging' tones or anything that suits your purpose.

9 Details such as the eyeballs should only be painted once you are happy with the structure of the face. I made sure to keep both inside and outside edges of the irises soft, strong colour in the insides of the lids and highlights on the bottom lid and inside corner, as well as the more obvious highlight on the pupil. I also refined the lips properly here, focusing on the transition from lip to cheek, and well as bringing out highlights on both lips to suggest more volume.

10 Time to make final amends. Firstly, I repainted the entire background, making it less chromatic in order to bring out the chroma (the purity of the colour) in the face. Secondly, I spent time tweaking the values and transitions on her left cheek. Getting the transitions in the cheeks soft enough can require extreme subtlety, particularly for portraits of young women. I also softened the edge of the cast shadow on her neck, the transition from forehead to hair parting and the top edge of her top lip, all areas which many painters leave too hard.

Tom teaches the Saturday School at the London Atelier of Representational Art. The next six-week term runs from 26 September to 31 October. To book your place, visit www.drawpaintsculpt.com. View more of Tom's own work at www.tomgreenwoodfineart.com



“ARTISTS CAN LEARN SO MUCH MORE ABOUT ART BY SEEING IT IN ITS ORIGINAL CONTEXT”

FORGET WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW

MEDIEVAL ART WAS BAD AND THE RENAISSANCE WAS GREAT – OR WAS IT? BEST-SELLING AUTHOR **DANA ARNOLD** BELIEVES THAT BY CHALLENGING THESE SIX PRECONCEPTIONS, WE CAN BEGIN TO CREATE ART FROM AN ENTIRELY FRESH PERSPECTIVE. ILLUSTRATION: **CIARAN MURPHY**

MEDIEVAL ART IS BAD

How many times have you heard the medieval period described as "The Dark Ages"? This term was coined in the 14th century by the Renaissance scholar, Petrarch, to suggest a widespread decline in civilisation after the fall of the Roman Empire. In art, this so-called decline is often characterised as a shift from the virtuoso naturalism of the Greco-Roman era, to the two-dimensional works we associate with Christian-Byzantine and Medieval art. But is it fair to dismiss medieval art as uncivilised? In fact, the myth that Medieval art is bad has historically stopped us asking why artists ignored established traditions. Perhaps flatness was seen as a more effective way to represent Christ and Christian iconography as celestial and timeless?

THE RENAISSANCE TOOK PLACE IN ITALY

When we think of the Renaissance, it is often thought of a wholly Italian movement, lead by masters such as Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael. But this is not entirely the case. The Renaissance was marked by a shift back to Greco-Roman traditions in all aspects of culture. This was symbolised by art's desire to imitate nature, a shift that occurred much further afield than just Italy, notably in Northern Europe with artists such as Albrecht Dürer pioneering the style. The fashion for naturalistic painting predominantly flourished among trade routes, which is why towards to end of the Renaissance you can see its influence stretch as far as Indian and Chinese art.

THERE WERE NO GREAT FEMALE ARTISTS

When we think of famous artists throughout history, it is easy to think female artists never existed. But this is another myth that changes our view of art history. In reality, women have been creating art since prehistoric times. New research suggests that women were responsible for as many cave paintings as men, based on the size of prehistoric handprints. We also know from written accounts, as well as the artworks themselves, that some women made a living as artists during the Renaissance and Baroque periods – Artemisia Gentileschi is one such artist.

And did you know that in 1863, when Édouard Manet's created his now-iconic *Olympia*, it was actually the painting's sitter, Victorine Meurent, who was the more celebrated artist?

ABSTRACT ART EMERGED RECENTLY

Historically in the West, we like to think of abstract art as a product of the 20th century. It's easy to think that Abstract Expressionists like Jackson Pollock or Franz Kline were doing something completely avant-garde if we only consider their work against a backdrop of other Western art.

In fact, abstract painting has long had significance outside of Europe. It is at the very heart of traditional East Asian art and calligraphy, which we know many of the Abstract Expressionists studied along with other East Asian traditions such as Zen Buddhism. The same can be said for European artists like Picasso, whose turn away from naturalism was influenced by African and Shamanic art, both of which placed value in the symbolic nature of abstraction.

STILL LIFE MUST BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE

It's tempting to think that still life paintings should be taken at face value: simple studies of things the average artist might have laying about his or her studio. Historically, however, the still life genre reached its pinnacle in 16th-century Northern Europe, at a time when Flemish and Dutch artists in particular were masters of creating hidden meaning in these seemingly simplistic paintings.

The rise of mercantile activity meant a huge rise in expendable income for the growing middle classes. As a result drinking, gambling and unorthodox behaviour became commonplace in society, and art responded with ominously symbolic paintings. The lute was no longer just a lute, but a sign of playfulness and folly, the empty wine glass a symbol of excess, and withering flowers became memento mori, a poetic reminder that in the end we will all meet our Maker.

THE BEST ART IS FOUND IN GALLERIES

The National Gallery, the Guggenheim, the Louvre... The world's best museums collect some of the most incredible artworks, but it doesn't mean that great art can't be found in other places and you can't beat seeing art its original setting. Whether contemporary (Gerhard Richter's stained glass window in Cologne cathedral) or prehistoric (the cave paintings at Lascaux), artists can learn so much more about art by seeing it in its original context.

Dana's new book, *A Short Book About Art*, is published by Tate, RRP £12.99. www.tate.org.uk

NEW TECHNIQUES

SILVERPOINT

THE BRITISH MUSEUM'S KEEPER OF PRINTS AND DRAWINGS, **HUGO CHAPMAN** INTRODUCES THIS DELICATE DRAWING TECHNIQUE

FROM LEFT: SUSAN SOHWALB. *STRATA NO. 407* 2005. SILVERPOINT ON PAPER. HENDRIK GOLTZIUS. *SELF PORTRAIT HOLDING A COPPER PLATE*. C. 1583. SILVERPOINT ON VELLUM. © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The British Museum's forthcoming exhibition *Drawing in Silver and Gold: Leonardo to Jasper Johns* is the first to celebrate and explore the 600-year history of metalpoint. This is, as the name implies, a graphic technique that depends on a thin metal stick or stylus – most commonly of silver but any soft metal, like gold or copper will serve – that leaves a thin deposit when used on a slightly abrasive, prepared surface.

Traditionally, this preparation involved mixing carbonised and ground-up animal bones into a gluey solution, which was brushed on and left to dry. It could be used on paper, parchment or even thin strips of wood. In Renaissance workshops, artists would mix up their own grounds, and in Italy they would often add pigments, but in the 19th century pre-prepared papers became available.

The advantage of metalpoint is that it is very hard wearing, as unlike more friable chalk and charcoal, it adheres to the preparation. In the Renaissance studio such durability was important, as drawings were a key resource frequently passed down to the next generation.

Metalpoint is a very linear and precise medium: the stylus produces a very even line so pressing harder or softer does not darken or lighten it significantly. Such limitations made it an exacting technique to master and metalpoint drawing became the cornerstone of the artistic education in Renaissance Europe. It demanded young artists to hone their control of the stylus since light and shade could only be rendered through subtle variation in the density of the shading.

As a stylus does not need to sharpened or dipped in ink it could, in the hands of someone adept and confident, be used with great freedom and spontaneity, its tip responsive to every turn of the artist's hand and wrist.

In the 16th century, Dutch artists relished the precise linearity of metalpoint and, by combining it with more flexible graphic media such as graphite and wash, they expanded its expressive possibilities, as can be seen in Hendrik Goltzius's swaggering *Self-Portrait Holding a Copper Plate*.

Today, the unchanging nature of metalpoint means that picking up a stylus is a kind of artistic statement: a declaration from contemporary artists, such as Jasper Johns and Bruce Nauman whose work closes the London exhibition, that their graphic skills can stand comparison with their Renaissance forebears.

***Drawing in Silver and Gold: Leonardo to Jasper Johns* runs from 10 September to 6 December at The British Museum, London WC1. www.britishmuseum.org**

HOW TO...

Prepare a sheet of paper for a silverpoint drawing

1. Moisten your paper and lay it on a large, clean wooden drawing board.

2. Using a flat varnish brush, apply the drawing ground in systematic strokes, working left to right.

3. Leave to dry for several hours. Carefully lift off the paper, using a palette knife if necessary.

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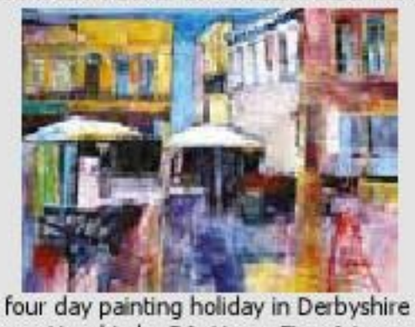

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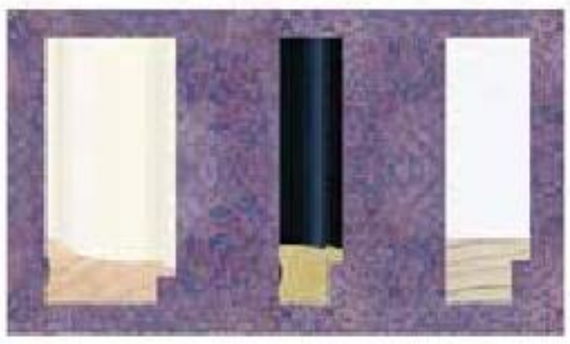

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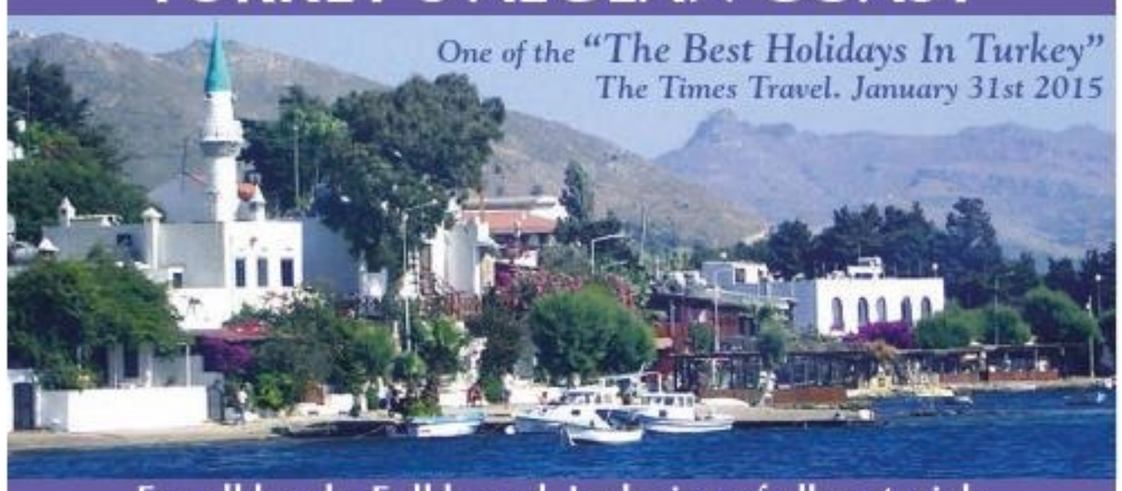

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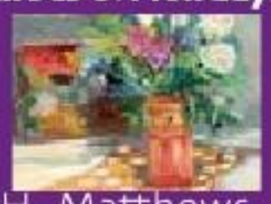

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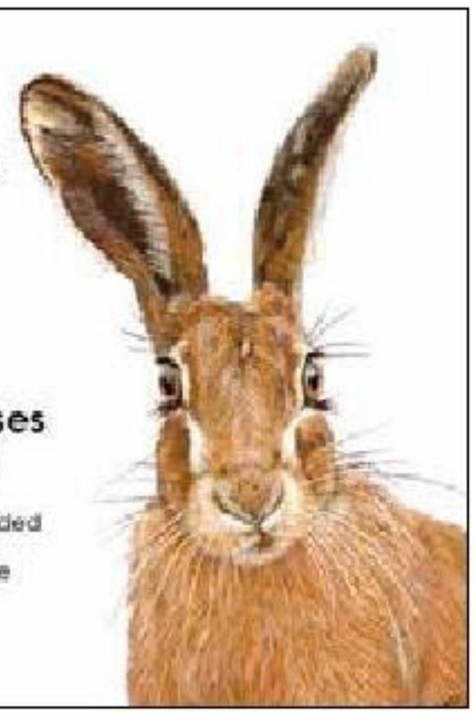

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Liquitex's Cadmium Red Light acrylic (1). It has the loveliest consistency of any paint I have used. Unfortunately, with the potential EU ban on cadmium, I might soon have to find an alternative!

MY FAVOURITE ILLUSTRATED BOOK

Cops and Robbers by Janet and Allan Ahlberg. Janet's beautiful pictures are full of charm and perfectly complement Allan's hilarious text.

MY DREAM GALLERY DAY OUT

A sunny afternoon at the **Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden (2)** in St Ives would be pretty hard to beat.

MY ARTISTIC HERO

The American comic book artist **Jack Kirby (3).** I've loved his work since I was a child. His incredible use of dramatic composition and dynamic figure drawing is still a huge inspiration to me.

MY LIFE-CHANGING EXHIBITION

William Eggleston at the Hayward Gallery in 2002. I was not familiar with his work, but his choice of subject matter and composition was intriguing. It had a huge impact on me.

MY COFFEE TABLE READ

***Saul Bass – A Life in Film & Design* by Jennifer Bass and Pat Kirkham (4)**, although by no means a coffee table book, is quite large!

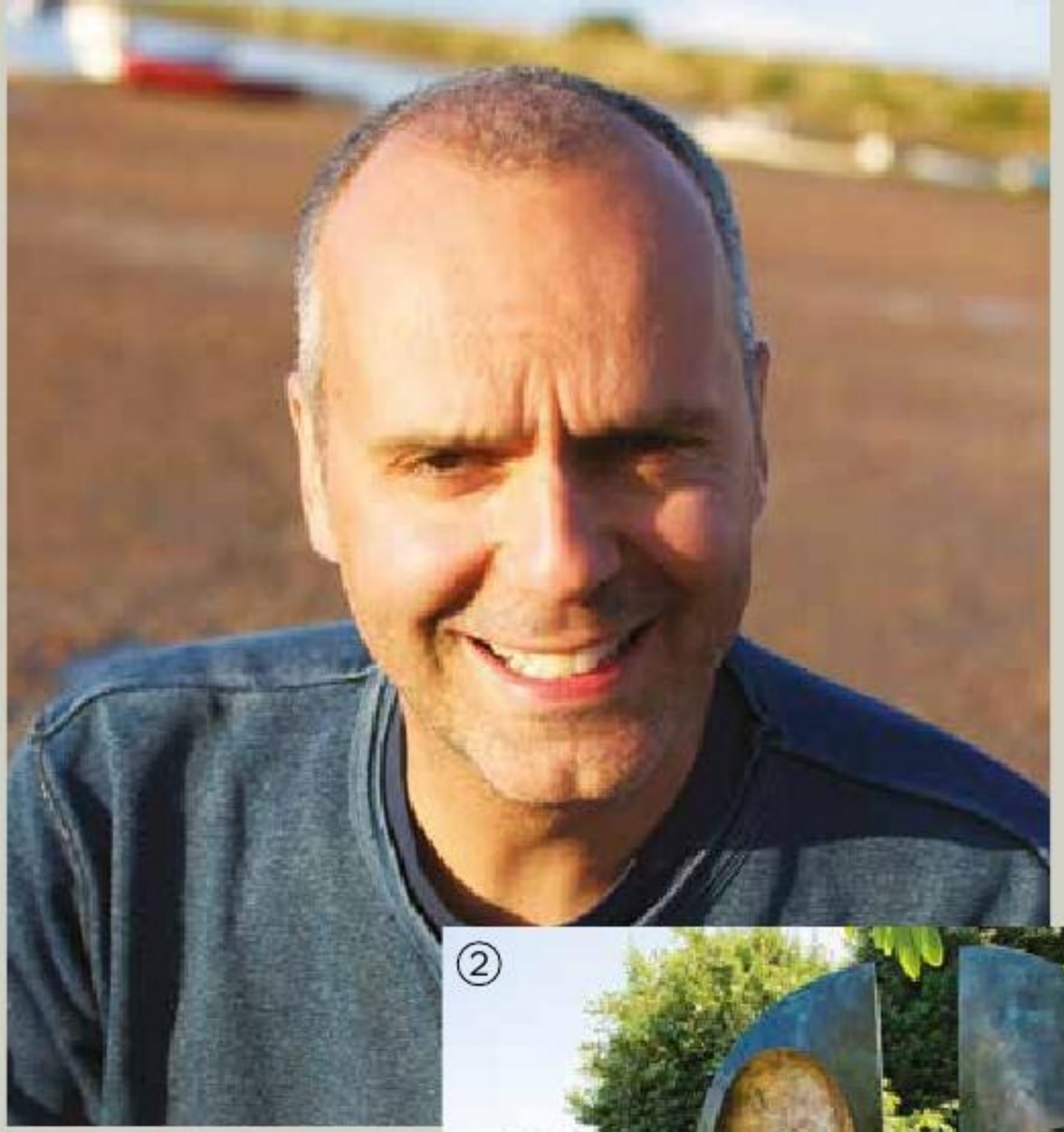
MY BOOKMARKED WEBSITE

Fishink (www.fishinkblog.com). It is a very interesting and informative blog that is frequently updated and covers design, graphics, photography, illustration and more.

MY FAVOURITE ART SHOP

When I'm in London I like to visit **Cass Art (5)** in Soho. They stock some great art materials, particularly sketchbooks, which I use a lot of, and the staff are always friendly and helpful.

Ben's illustrated the programme for *Bath Children's Literature Festival 2015*, which runs from 25 September to 4 October. The Red Chair Charity Art Auction takes place on 1 October. www.bathfestivals.org.uk



BARBARA HEPWORTH © BOWNESS. PHOTO: © TATE, MARCUS LEITH

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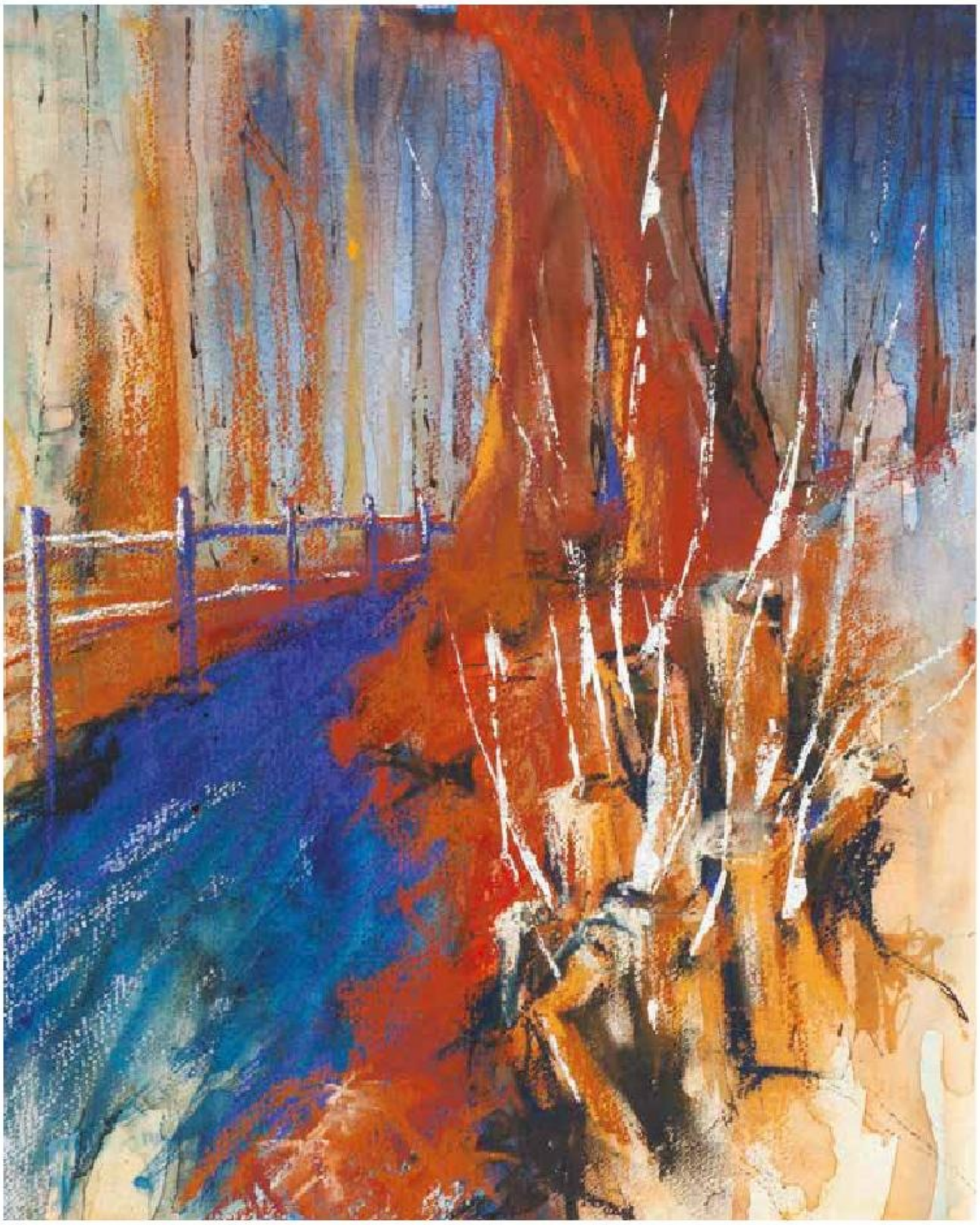

I began studying with the OCA a few years before retiring. For me life has always been about self discovery. In my present course of study for a degree in painting with the OCA, the journey is compelling me to look deep within myself to find a true expression, an innate response to the world around me.

Patricia Farrar
Painting student

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